

Disclaimer: I don't own Harry Potter or any of its characters. There, I said it so please, don't sue me.

1) James and Lily are nearly 32 in this story. The time line has been moved forward to Year 2001 starting on Harry's First Year.

Prologue: History Lesson

A ten, nearly eleven, year old Harry Potter closed the cover of another book he had been reading. Most would say that it was too complex and difficult for a normal child. But by no means was Harry James Potter normal. It had all started many years ago...on the year Nineteen Ninety, to be precise, that the Birth of Voldemort's Downfall came to be.

Twelve Years Ago, Interview of Sybil Trelawney...

"Three come to change what we have known...

As they are brought up upon the world we roam...

One of the Three will vanquish the Dark Lord...

Two shall rule with an iron fist...

The Three will have the Strength to fight...

One shall have power over the mind of others...

One shall have the power of the soul...

And the last will strike out with fury of Thor and Poseidon in him...

Together, untied, unstoppable...

The Dragon Rises as the Lord of the Dark does...

The Lady of the Flame follows soon after...

And together, Death, they shall conquer even...

For the time of change is fast approaching...

Much blood will be spilled over it...

But they must be victorious...

Or the World will end in flame...

The sign of the Vanquisher is clear...

Born upon the end of the seventh month...

A Lord among compatriots...

A Leader among people...

A Warrior among comrades...

And a hope to all those who believe..."

The glazed look left Sybil's face, but the Headmaster was perturbed by the prophecy nonetheless. He didn't know what to be worried about more. The fact that the World was doomed unless it changed or that Voldemort might even grow powerful enough to conquer the world...or destroy it. He always had questioned the sanity of his former pupil.

Trelawney's voice snapped Dumbledore out of his musings. "I... I'm sorry Albus. I must have dozed of a little. So where were we in this-?"

Albus raised his right hand to stop her from talking anymore. "No need for this to continue. I am sure that you are meant take the post of Divination in Hogwarts."

"Thank You Albus."

"No Sybil, thank you." Dumbledore calmly left the pub, thinking over the words he had heard from her trance-like state.

James' POV- One Year Later, St Mungoes...

I smiled as I looked at the new born babies in my arms. My wife was fast asleep, exhausted after the tiring task of giving birth. It was a good thing they had magic to help ease the pain for her. Thank God for Magic.

Alexei, my firstborn was exploring the hospital with a Guide escorting him. My Family was a well respected one and still had a fair bit of favors to call in from very powerful people. I looked at the innocent sleeping babies in my arms again. Lily and I had decided to name the girl Katie Elizabeth Potter while her younger fraternal twin was to be named Harold James Potter.

I looked up to see Dumbledore. "James, what time were they born?"

I frowned worriedly. Albus didn't concern himself with such things usually. "Katie was born 11:56 PM while Harry was born at 12:00 MN. Why?"

I swear I saw him smile as he heard what I said. "Your children might be part of a prophecy to bring down Voldemort." I had managed not to flinch at the name this time. I am actually quite proud- wait, did he just say my children might be part of a prophecy to bring down Voldemort? I will not panic until I understand completely. My children might be in imminent danger at the moment but I will not panic. That or Dumbledore's possibly gone senile. That doesn't really make me feel any better.

"WHAT!" I will not pa- Darn, I just panicked. I have to learn how to control myself.

"Calm down, I said might. There are two other candidates." I felt a surge of hope as I heard this. It might have been selfish to wish that this burden was on someone else but I can't really bring myself to care right now.

"Others? Who are they?"

“Neville Longbottom was born on 11:57 PM while Robert Slivenson was born on 11:59 PM. Now let me tell you of the prophecy before you make your own conclusions. The Sign of the Vanquisher’s Coming is clear...Born upon the end of the month...A Lord among compatriots...A Leader among people...A Warrior among comrades...And a hope to all who believe.” Well, that told me absolutely nothing. Out of those six lines, one isn’t a clue to who it could be, and the other four have to be seen in time.

Couldn’t Prophecies been simpler? Couldn’t it just have said here’s your rescuer, guide and train him up right and he will kick the Dark Lord’s Ass for you. Oh, by the way, have a nice life. But no, they had to be mysterious riddles within conundrums. Did I jut think the word conundrums? Wow, Lily’s has been more of an influence to me than I though. But back to the topic at hand, I hate prophecies.

Normal POV, One Year Later...

Alexei Grastovi was a spy under the Dark Lord. He had been recognized near instantly for his skills in infiltration, and illusionary magic. He had befriended Peter Pettigrew, a member of the wretched Order of the Phoenix and, more importantly, a friend of the infamous Potters who were housing three of the Chosen Candidates. The Slivensons had moved in with them because of the Potter’s particularly strong wards.

A few Compulsion Charms later, he was Peter’s best friend in the world. It was amazing Dumbledore never put in precautionary measures to stop something like this from happening. He also never found out. Illusionary Magic helped cover that bit up.

He was currently lounging in his living room, when the fireplace lit up. The all too familiar face of Pettigrew appeared. He looked distressed. In a mask and voice of fake concern, he said, “Peter, what’s wrong? You look as if you-know-who’s going to attack you.”

“He might as well. The Potters are making me their secret keeper.”

“Don’t worry about it. I’ll help you find a place to hide in.”

"Thanks, I knew I could count on you Alexei."

Halloween, Switching of the Secret Keepers...

Alexei stepped out of Pettigrew's fireplace. He scanned the room searching for any sign of the Rat Animagus. "Peter, where are you?"

"I'm in the kitchen!" Was the reply. Alexei stepped headed to the kitchen. He saw Pettigrew there eating his breakfast. In moments, he had Pettigrew under an Imperious Curse.

"Peter, you will remain unseen. You will give me your wand, some locks of hair and drops of blood. Then, you are to commit suicide after an hour." After Alexei acquired the requested items, he put the locks of hair in a potion that could only be described as polyjuice. The blood he put in a vial and the wand he put in his back pocket. He downed the foul tasting potion in one gulp. Slowly, he began to take the face and body of Peter Pettigrew. When he had fully transformed, he made his way to the Potter Manor by foot.

He saw James Potter and Sirius Black waiting for him outside the house. "Password, Peter?" James asked.

"Err...um...I forgot." Alexei said in disguise, hoping to fool them.

James and Sirius laughed heartily. "Only you would forget something this important Peter." Sirius waved his wand and the Fidelius Charm was canceled. The main flaw of the Fidelius was that it could be canceled out instantly by the Secret Keeper. That was the reason why the Secret Keeper had to be a very trusted person."

Raising Peter's wand, Alexei yelled, "Getrouwheid!" A white beam enveloped the entire house before it disappeared from everyone's sight except Alexei. The Fidelius was originally invented by the Dutch to protect themselves from religious persecution in the Age of Colonialism. After a moment, Alexei added, "Uitbrengen voor James Potter, Lily Potter, Albus Dumbledore, Sirius Black, Remus Lupin, Alexei Potter, Maria Slivenson, Gregory Slivenson, and Robert Slivenson." A blue flash of light passed over the house and it

appeared again to the sight of James and Sirius. With that, he apparated away to tell his lord of the news.

7:00 PM, Godric's Hallow...

A dark cloaked man ambled through the festive Town of Godric's Hallow. Children and Parents alike kept their distance from this man as they went of trick or treating. A cold aura surrounded the man and a dangerous glint was evident in his eyes. Stopping at what seemed to be an empty lot, he recalled his spy telling him the Location of the house.

The house materialized in front of him which caused him to grin manically. Stepping on the crisp grass, he disappeared to anyone outside of the Fidelius Charm. A casual flick of his wand ripped the door from its hinges. Grinning maliciously, he stepped into the house and brought his wand in a downward sweep, causing the Two Elder Potters and Slivensons (who were visiting at the time) to be thrown into a wall. Stepping over the unconscious, slumping bodies of Lily and James Potter, he made his way to the Nursery. Or at least what he perceived to be the general location of the Nursery. In his arrogance, he hadn't really bothered to find out where it was.

He blasted open the door of one room revealing it to be the library. Growling angrily, he strode down through the hall, blasting apart doors left and right in an effort to locate the three brats (not including Alex). Of course, he eventually found them...after taking apart half the bloody house and an hour of grueling door blasting.

Now Dumbledore, the Order of the Phoenix, the Aurors and generally the slow responsive 'Light Side' had not yet appeared. You want to know why? Because they were still mobilizing a Crack Team and forming a plan on how to apprehend Voldemort. Yeah, that's what they did for the span of one hour. Effective aren't they?

Voldemort had found the Nursery and entered it to see that all three babies were in a single crib. Tightly gripping his wand, he sent three Avada Kedavras at the toddlers. To his surprise, the two identical curses flew back at him. He ducked both of them and stood up only to

be hit by another killing he died. Or at least, his soul was removed from his physical body.

A piece of his soul entered Harry, which is the reason why he had accelerated knowledge and comprehension of things. Of course, instead of the Harry becoming a Horcrux, Harry had (literally) absorbed the soul and drained it of its usefulness before promptly crushing the soul with raw magic. This caused Harry to be rendered unconscious. The two other brats were declared the children-who-lived half an hour later because of the indecisiveness of Dumbledore. Well, it doesn't matter seeing as the Wizarding world fell for it Hook, Line, and Sinker.

Three Years Later...

A four year old Harry looked in satisfaction at his new room. He had been allowed to move his room next to the library. Excitedly, he rushed into the library and began looking around for something interesting to read. Just then, a book caught his attention. The title was Wandless Magic: The Art of Control. That seemed like an interesting book to him. As a child, it was understandable that he wanted to do magic. And since he didn't have a wand yet, this would have to do. He wasted no time in climbing up a sliding ladder and getting the book.

He eagerly opened the book and read the first chapter.

Chapter I: What is Wandless Magic?

"What is Wandless Magic? Wandless Magic is the use of Magic without the use of a magical conductor, harnessing mechanism, or focuser. It has been commonly referred to as Wandless Magic because the main conductor of magic used nowadays is a wand hence the terminology. This branch of Magic is thought to be cast-able only by extremely Powerful wizards. That is a very common misconception. In fact, Wandless Magic is more prone to be cast-able by weaker magic users due to the control required in having such little magic. Control is the main factor required to cast wandless magic. Without proper control, one cannot tap into his/her magical core to do said magic. If a person were able to hypothetically cast a

stunner wandlessly as compared to that cast with a magical conduit, the one cast wandlessly would be vastly superior to it in terms of power. The main problem why many people cannot do wandless magic is due to laziness. When too reliant on the wand, attempts to cast wandless magic is also hindered significantly..."

After reading the surprisingly thin book, Harry began to concentrate tapping into his magical core. He could do so, however, not yet. There might have been more to this wandless magic thing.

Three Years Later...

Harry began reading yet another book, devouring the information. He had nearly read every book in the the highly extensive Potter Family Library. Over one thousand gathered manuscripts concerning all sorts of magic. History, Culture of Other Magical Creatures, Etiquette, Dueling, Battle Magic, Flying, Crafts, Sports, Law, Literature, Defensive Magic, Offensive Magic, Transfiguration, Transmutation, Alchemy, Potions, Muggles, Muggle Literature, the list went on and on. It was during one of these times that his eldest brother Alexei had caught him reading a highly advanced manuscript in the library.

He had seen bits of his capabilities in wandless magic and he was impressed so far. Alex had mastered more complex spells using it and quickly rose to become top of his class in every subject. The most potential Hogwarts had ever seen in years, they called him. After catching him once, he decided to let him use his wand to practice sparring against preset Magical Dummies. The duel ended with the Dummy being burned to ashes.

After which he started teaching him things that books could not. Things which could be taken only from experience, the one thing that Harry lacked the most. He could teach him more about social gatherings, customs, and loopholes in the law.

One Year Later...

Harry held the sword firmly over his head. Alex stood ten meters from him, his blade hanging loosely to his side. "Begin." Alex said and in an instant, Harry rushed forward to attack. He swung his sword

downwards as soon as he reached Alex, who only parried the blow effortlessly by bringing his sword slightly above his head. Alex then swung the pushed the his sword forward, making Harry lose his balance slightly.

Harry jumped backwards narrowly evading a swipe. He hastily countered by thrusting his sword. Alex swept it aside with his own sword before crouching down quickly and taking a swipe at Harry's legs. Harry fell down as Alex stood back up and placed his wooden sword by his neck. Harry lowered his head conceding defeat. "Never think that your opponent won't go muggle on you Harry. In a battle, use everything you have to beat him. It isn't about being good or noble, its about staying alive and walking out that way."

Alex threw a stick towards him which Harry caught using his rapid response reflexes. "I had that Trainee Wand crafted for you so you could practice magic better. Going without can only get you so far. If you ever want to reach your full potential you must start as soon as possible." It was easy for families to ward their houses to prevent inside detection from the Ministry.

Two Years Later, Present Day...

"Reducto." The spell streaked across the lawn and slammed into a tree, punching a hole through it. Alex looked at Harry expectantly.

"Is that all I taught you Harry? I'm disappointed."

Growling Harry began to release a barrage of spells and hexes. "Stupefy. Stupefy. Expelliarmus. Stupefy. Bombardo. Petrificus Totalus. Talea. Incindre." Harry chanted, sending spell after spell while taking a step forward with each one cast. Alex batted away the spells with his wand using a special technique called magical interception. It was basically using raw magic to affect the magic in itself, a rather complex art.

Harry suddenly pulled out a sword and ran the last few meters, lashing out with quick, precise strikes designed to knock someone off balance. Unfortunately for him, Alex knew all of his tricks. He taught them to Harry after all. With that said, Alex dodged each blow and

executed counterattacks perfectly. Harry spun around and tried to kick Alex's chest. The Eldest of the Potter children was able to grab the foot in time. Harry slid out a hidden wand into his left hand and sent a stunner straight at his chest.

Alex was a little shocked by this move, never seeing it before but quickly recovered from his shock. He let go of Harry's foot and ducked the spell. He rolled away as another blasting hex hit the ground he used to be on. He swiped his wand and caused the ground to shake slightly making Harry fall. Alex towered above him, trailing his wand at him. "Do you yield?"

"Not yet." Harry said. he sprang into action, kicking Alex's foot hard. Then he got back up and pointed his wand at Alex only to find him doing the same. Alex immediately sent a stunner while Harry sent a disarm. Both spells hit their targets. Harry was revived a minute later.

"Nice touch at the last part but you made the mistake of sending an Expelliarmus. True, I would have no weapon, but you would be unconscious, unable to do anything."

"Yes, but in a battle, you could easily be taken out of the fight in that moment."

"Yes, but the goal is to walk out alive not to win. Winning is just a Bonus."

Harry nodded and the two started to duel again.

Please review.

Chapter One: Diagon Alley

Harry sat in his room, reading quietly, when a rapping sound drew his attention away from his book. He opened the window, and an owl flew into his room and dropped a letter on his bed before flying away. Harry tore his gaze from the owl and went to his bed. Picking up the letter, he noticed that the Hogwarts Crest was on the envelope. Excitedly, he tore the envelope open and read through the letter.

HOGWARTS SCHOOL OF WITCHCRAFT AND WIZARDRY

Headmaster: Albus Dumbledore

(Order of Merlin, First Class, Grand Sorc., Chf. Warlock, Supreme Mugwump, International Confed. of Wizards)

Dear Mr. Potter,

We are pleased to inform you that you have a place at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Please find enclosed a list of all necessary books and equipment.

Term begins on 1 September (or when you happen to register). We await your owl by no Later then 31st of July.

Yours Sincerely,

Minerva McGonagall

Deputy Headmistress

Harry scribbled that he would attend and tied onto the feet of his owl named 'Hedwig' which was given to him for his fourth birthday. "Hey Hedwig, I need you to take this to Deputy Headmistress McGonagall. Do you understand?" He asked while stroking the head of the snow feathered Owl. The owl hooted in confirmation and zoomed towards Hogwarts at a leisurely pace.

His owl was a magical breed called the Canadian Snow Owl. It was extremely enduring and fairly fast at flying. Harry had brought it up

himself ever since it was a youngling. They weren't used anymore in Europe because of the expense of its importation, though some very rich pureblood families still bought them.

HOWGARTS SCHOOL OF WITCHCRAFT AND WIZARDRY

Uniform

First year students will require:

Three sets of plain work robes (black)

One plain pointed hat (black) for day wear

One pair of protective gloves (dragon hide or similar)

One winter cloak (black, silver fastenings)

Please note that all pupils' clothes should carry name tags

Set Books

All students should have a copy of each of the following:

The Standard Book of Spells (Grade 1) by Miranda Goshawk

A History of Magic by Bathilda Bagshot

Magical Theory by Adalbert Waffling

A Beginners' Guide to Transfiguration by Emeric Switch

One Thousand Magical Herbs and Fungi by Phyllida Spore

Magical Drafts and Potions by Arsenius Jigger

Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them by Newt Scamander

The Dark Forces: A Guide to Self-Protection by Quentin Trimble

Other Equipment

1 wand

1 cauldron (pewter, standard size 2)

1 set glass or crystal phials

1 telescope

1 set brass scales

Students may also bring an owl, cat or toad

PARENTS ARE REMINDED THAT FIRST YEARS ARE NOT ALLOWED THEIR OWN BROOMSTICKS

"No Quidditch?" Harry reread, amused. He could just imagine the amount of students complaining about this; the children-who-lived being part of that. He winced at the thought. He would hate to be Dumbledore right now. Several influential people would go against this new rule. It would prove to be the cause of many headaches for the aged Headmaster.

Harry jumped out of the way as another blow narrowly missed him. He somersaulted backwards and smashed his wooden sword against that of his opponent dummy. He brought his wand to his face, blocking another attack. He spun around and kicked the dummy in the stomach, sending it sprawling onto the floor, defeated. He wiped some sweat off his face and turned to look at his brother for comment.

"Well done, brother, but lets see how well you go up against me now." Alex said casually swinging his wooden katana in the air. With a strong swipe, he brought his sword upon Harry's and made the boy step back slightly at the force of the blow. Alex continued his strong assault against Harry which made Harry fall back, losing ground slowly. A sudden swipe sent Harry's sword flying. "Work on your grip and try to attack me at some point. You don't expect to win a fight by staying on the defensive, do you?" The two sparred again.

Bustling crowds filled the cobblestone streets of the Shopping Center known as Diagon Alley. However, there were more people in the Alley now than ever before in the past ten years.

The reason? Robert Slivenson and Katy Potter, the children-who-lived, were coming to Diagon Alley today to shop for their school supplies. As you can imagine, their fame had grown since the Halloween of 1981. Reporters from every province and city in the UK were there; Hordes of people and fans waiting to show their appreciation for the two 'saviors' of the wizarding communities. While all this took place, however, the Potter Prodigy would remain, for the most part, ignored. Keeping to the shadows" was more to Harry's liking.

He and his brother were walking inconspicuously towards the Gringots Bank to withdraw some money from the Potter Shopping Vault. They had gone ahead of the rest of their family, deeming them as too slow. They would just shop on their own. It wasn't that hard. Plus, they could get some extra books their parents would never find out about, thus hiding the true extent of their skills. Most of the reason was attributed to the fact that their parent's never bothered to check on these vaults. In fact, no one knew of what they did except the goblins and themselves.

Harry looked at the goblin teller serving them. "Greetings, Honorable Goblin of Old, I come with my older brother to withdraw some of our money from this fine establishment. May your business be profitable." He said in Gobbledygook (goblin tongue).

The goblin grinned toothily at Harry. "Hello, young one. It has been a long time since I have heard someone speak to me in my native tongue. I shall send for Goblin Griphook to accompany you in your withdrawal. May your business bear fruit." The goblin replied. Alex raised his eyebrow at this transaction. It was hard to get a goblin to be courteous to a human. He himself could understand the language and it gave him a sort of pride that his brother could as well.

A goblin named 'Griphook' approached and guided them through large oak doors. Inside, several large carts were lined up. Griphook got into one and said, "All aboard." The two jumped into the large

metal cart and they were off as soon as Griphook pulled a lever. Harry, for some strange, unexplainable reason, had always liked riding at high speeds whether it be on land or on broom.

Their cart swiftly rushed past several vaults at high speeds over two hundred miles per hour. After riding at this speed for more or less three minutes, they arrived at Vault Number 953 AKA the Potter Family Shopping Fund. Only those of Potter Blood could go through. Inside, piles of Gold, heaps of silver, and mounds of bronze filled the chamber to the brink of its capacities. Taking a sack each, the two brothers proceeded to fill their bags up with some Galleons. About five hundred each was their shopping allowance that they were 'required' to take with them. The knuts and sickles were there just for display.

After retrieving said amount of golden coins, the two of them with their goblin friend rode their cart to Vault 745, the Potter Family Knowledge Vault. It held the secrets of the Potter Family that was accumulated through the years. You see, all the old families had a form of specialty. The Potter's were no exception. They were masters of Battle Magic and had a vault filled with their most guarded aspects and findings on Battle Magic.

Harry took some books called the "Legacy of the Power" Series which was recommended to be read first. It was about the philosophy and concept of Magic. His brother took another one called "Spells of Battle", the most dangerous book in the vault. After acquiring the two very old manuscripts, the two walked to the Vault beside, Vault 744 of the Potter Armory and Weaponry. Inside were an assortment of vast weapons and armor. Anything ranging from a Poison coated Dagger to the Heavy Broadsword to the Dragon Hide Battle Robes to Mithril Battle Vests. Each of them got a set of Dragon Hide Battle Robe.

Alex's was midnight blue in color. A red and gold Lion was engraved on the back of the robes. The Potter Crest was sewn onto the Chest of the battle robe. Its Dragon Hide was made from the exotic and rare Malayan Metal Skin, known for its resistance to spells.

Harry's was onyx black in color and had the same engravings as Alex's. It was made from the fierce Vietnamese Forest Obliterator

known for the aggression aura it could give off upon its wearer. It could prove to be addictive if the person who wore it wasn't careful. It would be perfect to teach a person about self control and discipline. A definite must for someone like Harry who was a beginner at weapons wielding.

The two brothers left the Goblin run bank with their things stored in their customized and warded Seven Compartment trunks. Each Trunk had their own set of customized Rune Locking system with voice recognition passwords, wand locks, and three levels of varying degrees of security from Light to Fatal. In short, it was a Standard Senior Auror Trunk, very guarded, very secure. It would take a skilled curse breaker half a day just to break its defenses and open the trunk safely.

Harry and Alex entered Ollivander's wand shop. The tinkle of a small bell was heard. And the wand maker greeted them. "Ah, Alex Potter with your brother, Harry Potter, I presume. Well, I suppose you're here for a wand then."

"No, I'm here to enjoy the beautiful shop you have." Harry said sarcastically. The old man chuckled at his antics.

"Which wand is your wand arm?" Ollivander asked.

"I am right handed, sir." Harry replied.

"Very well," Ollivander walked behind the counter and started to go through the many shelves filled with wands, "try this, Phoenix Feather and Yew, eleven inches; snappy and excellent for Charms." Harry waved the wand at a nearby mirror and caused it to break. Ollivander snatched the wand from his hand and put it back on a shelf. "Dragon Heartstring and Arctic Ice Oak, thirteen inches, useful for aiming and precise spell casting, try." Harry held the wand at its hilt with his left hand and swished it lightly. The shattered mirror started to come back together but cracks were still visible.

"Mr. Potter, are you ambidextrous?" He asked curiously.

"If you are asking if I have equal ability in both of my hands, then no. If you are asking if I can use my left hand as well as my right with ease but not equal ability, then yes."

"Ah, thank you for clearing that up for me. Try this, Dragon Heartstring and Fire Birch, eleven inches." The result was nothing short of catastrophic. Shelves collapsed instantly and simultaneously. "Definitely not the one for you, but we are getting close because of the powerful effects." Suddenly, a wand shot out from under the piles of shelves and into Harry's hand. Harry gave it a wave. The shelves returned to their original positions, repaired with neatly stacked wands.

"Interesting, that wand is made of Dragon Frost Shard and Dark Yew, eleven inches. Frost Shard is very rare to find these days, especially this kind. Dark Yew is a mutated strain of Yew. An exotic combination I made a few years ago that no one could use. I expect great things from you. That will cost a hundred galleons for its rarity."

After giving the money to Ollivander, Harry asked, "Do you have any wand holsters?"

I hadn't expected for this wand to be sold. I didn't think anyone would be powerful enough, to be honest. But this young man must possess great potential if he is able to wield it. Perhaps I should send this news to Dumbledore along with Slivenson's purchase of his phoenix's second core wand. No, he didn't ask me to. I shan't trouble him with such things. The aged wand maker thought, watching the two leave his store with standard Auror holsters carrying their wands.

After eating lunch, they went to Madam Malkin's Robes for all Occasions. There, they bought five sets of plain black robes, one with silver linings, two sets of plain white shirts, a pair of Dragon Hide gloves, a black hat, a scarf, two vests, and a cardigan. It had no logos as that would be taken care of in Hogwarts.

At the Apothecary, they bought the advanced potions set with complete potions materials, a Brass Scale, a set of Crystal Phials, and a Cauldron which cost a total of three hundred galleons. In Flourish and Blots, they spent over an hour looking over books after

buying their School Books. After a long wait, the rest of their family finally caught up. Each of them wore the Potter Signet Ring which could only be removed by a true Potter. It also acted as a portkey, which was their way of travel. James raised his wand and brought it down with a swift swinging motion. The family disappeared in a blue flash to their home.

Chapter Two: Hogwarts

Rays of sunlight shined upon the grounds of Potter Mansion. It was still early in the morning. The sound of a constant clashing of blades filled the air effectively breaking the silence. Harold Potter, more commonly known as Harry was sparring against his brother, Alex.

Harry ducked as the sword of Alex narrowly missed his head. Jumping backwards, he pointed his sword at his brother. Alex, in response, brought his blade against Harry's. Harry thrust his blade upwards and jumped over Alex before twirling around to deflect another blow from Alex. Crouching, he swiped at Alex's feet. Alex jumped and thrust his sword downwards in a quick single motion to Harry's neck.

Harry took a few steps back and drew his wand, dropping his sword. Alex followed suit. A stunner flew out of Harry's wand straight at Alex which was deflected onto a tree. Twirling his wand, Harry sent cutting curse at his sibling. Alex side stepped it and pointed his wand at the ground, muttering a quick incantation. The ground Harry was on started to rumble and shake causing him to fall. With a casual flick, Harry was disarmed.

"Your rate of fire needs some work, Harry. If you fire off your spells too slowly, it will be ineffective against the enemy. Your aim is fine and your posture is as well. But I think you need to learn how to dodge properly. Start training when you get to Hogwarts. Take this to help you sneak away." Alex said handing him back his wand and a piece of blank parchment. Harry pocketed his wand and stared down at the parchment.

"Alex, it's a blank piece of parchment. How is this supposed to help me?" Alex smirked at him.

"Like this, I call upon the aid of the Marauder's Past." He said, pointing his wand at the paper. Lines and Drawings appeared in the parchment forming the blueprints of Hogwarts. "This is the Rogue's Map, a version of the Marauder's Map. The only difference between the two is that this one has some added features like tracing down a specific person in the Castle. I already know the place like the back of

my hand along with the Weasley Twins. Those two always had a knack for trouble. Take my advise, if they offer you candy, don't take any. It's bound to be riddled with potions and pranks galore. To make the map fade away say "The Rogue's Quest is fulfilled" and tap it with your wand." Harry took the map and banished it to his trunk.

"Thanks, Alex."

"Just don't lose it. It took me nearly a year to get that thing complete."

The two of them returned to the kitchen. "I'll whip us up some breakfast. What do you want? Omelets? Pancakes?" Harry had, believe it or not, learned how to cook when he was a young boy when he was bored. He learned by observing his mother, reading some cook books, and watching some muggle cooking shows.

"I'll have some toast and scrambled eggs." Alex said, taking a seat.

"Right away." Harry cracked an egg onto the frying pan, while placing some bread into the toaster. Their mom, being a muggleborn, had wanted their children to live in a wizarding home with muggle appliances and comforts. It wasn't like their father could say no to her at that time.

"So, are you excited to go to Hogwarts?"

"Yeah, it'll be nice to see the place from all the stories you keep telling me about it."

"Yes, and how can we forget all the girls who will be chasing after you. Give it a year, and you'll have fan girls hunting you down."

Harry turned beet red. "Shut up." Ever since Harry was young, his brother had liked to tease him about the usual reaction he got from girls. Even though his sister was the more famous of the two, Harry had been ensured a small amount of it himself by association. He had a picture of himself being posted every once in awhile. And that is how he had accumulated his own crowd of followers, albeit they were unwanted ones.

The two of them spent the next few hours packing their trunk and getting ready to leave. By the time their parents had awoken with their sister (who was now frantically rushing through the house, packing), they were done with an hour to spare. They spent it playing some Exploding Snap.

Hordes of people flocked into the station known as King's Cross Station. Nothing significant to the muggle world; it was just a regular train station to them. But to the Wizarding world, it was totally different. It was well known as the largest Magical/Muggle Train Station in England. It also housed the famous Hogwarts Express; the train which would bring the youths gifted in magic to the supposedly "greatest school in all of Europe". Harry doubted that it was the greatest school in Europe much less the UK; though the latter wouldn't be too far off from reality as it was the same incompetent Ministry that ran the other schools in Britain.

Harry and Alex ran through Platforms 9 and $\frac{3}{4}$. The sight that was in front of them was not a significant one. It was a mere train, ordinary like any other. The only reason why most people saw it as something special was because of the place it would bring them too. Well, to most children it seemed like that. But Harry wasn't like most children.

The two brothers entered a compartment and set down their trunks. Minutes later, Cedric Diggory joined them.

"Alex, nice to see you again, old chap." Cedric said cheerily. "And this must be your brother you keep telling me about. Harry, right?"

"Yes, Cedric, his name is Harry. Four years younger than me." Alex replied.

"Ah, seems like a nice boy to me." Cedric turned to Harry. "Hope to see you in Hufflepuff, all the good people are there. It's us that lightens the mood around gits like your brother." Alex snorted.

"So Cedric, if you are quite done propagating your beliefs to my brother, would you mind telling me how your summer was."

"It was great. Me and my family went to the Swiss Alps on a skiing trip and I met some people there."

Alex snorted. "You mean some blonde haired girl you talked to in your hotel."

"How'd you know?"

"Please, the people you meet in every vacation are nearly always the same kind." Just then, the compartment door swung open. Robert Slivenson and some lackeys of his strode arrogantly through the door.

"You three, get out of here. This is my compartment."

"Well, I don't see your name here so it's not your compartment. Now go away and stop bothering us." In response, Robert and his 'friends' pointed their wands at them.

"Repulso." The air around Alex pressurized and blasted the meddlesome brats out of the room.

Harry stared blankly at the door before standing up. "I'm going now. I'd rather not be here when the boy wonder comes back." Harry said, walking out of the compartment.

Half an hour later found Harry in a secluded compartment, reading. The sound of the door opening drew Harry's attention away from his book.

"I hear that the children-who-lived are on this train. Have you seen them?"

Harry looked at the boy and snorted. "Blonde hair, aristocratic air, pureblood courtesy, you must be a Malfoy. Now when, you first came into this compartment, I thought that you would actually be actually someone worth talking to, unlike the usual dunderheads I see running around this train, hunting down marked children like squealing fans. Imagine to my surprise, when you, the Scion of House Malfoy, are one of those people. Your father will be most disappointed in you, Draconius."

Malfoy flushed in embarrassment at being so blatantly chastised by this stranger. Yet, deep down, he knew this boy was right. What would his father say if he saw him now. Regaining his composure, Draco said, "My apologies, Stranger. My name is..."

"Draconius Oxtor Malfoy, son of Lucius and Narcissa Malfoy, Heir and Scion of the Ancient and Honorable House of Malfoy. And I," Harry drawled out, "am Harold Potter or Harry for short, son of James and Lily Potter and pupil of Alexei Potter, who is the Scion of the Ancient and Righteous House of Potter. A pleasure to meet you" Harry said, extending his hand.

Draco looked at it for a moment before shaking it. "The pleasure is all mine, Harry." Two large, burly boys followed Draco into the room. "And this is Crabbe and Goyle. They aren't very bright so it'll be best if you just ignore them." He stated. The two brutes grunted in unison.

"Don't you have anyone educated to talk to. It must be dreadfully boring staying with these brutes. Not much of a conversationalist, those two."

"Well, I can talk with my childhood playmates like Daphne Greengrass and Theodore Nott. I haven't seen them lately though. I suppose we'll see them during the sorting."

"What about that girl I've seen you with? Who was she again? Daisy?"

Draco scowled at the mention of the 'girl'. "Her name's Pansy and I absolutely despise her. She's got no dignity whatsoever."

"Aw, come on Draco, you only feel that way because you found out this summer that you two were engaged, but deep down, I know you care for her as she does for you." He said, smirking.

Draco stared at him as if he had grown a second head. "That'll happen when hell freezes over. And how did you find out about that?"

Harry's smirk grew wider. "It was announced at the Daily Prophet."

"I'm going to kill my parents." The aristocrat mumbled.

"You want to be in Slytherin House, right?" Harry asked after a moment of awkward silence.

"Yes, though, going into Ravenclaw wouldn't be too bad. But, imagine the shame I would have to endure if I got into Hufflepuff. God forbid." Draco said, shuddering involuntarily at the thought.

The door opened, yet again, and Draco's goons stood up to meet the newcomer. A chubby boy appeared. "Um, hi. I'm Neville Longbottom. Can I sit here?" He asked nervously.

"Sure." Harry said quickly, preventing Draco from getting a chance to say no.

"Harry, what are you thinking. Letting him, a Longbottom, sit here. Sure, he's a pureblood, but he's practically a squib!" Draco whispered.

"Squib? That's ridiculous. Neville just hasn't reached anywhere near his potential yet. He'll be a useful friend and ally one day. The fact that the Longbottom name has a lot of pull doesn't hurt his usefulness." Harry replied under his breath, taking care not to let Neville hear their private dialogue.

"So, Neville, what House do you want to be in?" Harry asked, trying to start up a confabulation.

And so, in the course of over five hours, Harry Potter had managed to create the beginning of a friendship between a Malfoy and a Longbottom, a miracle in itself. Of course, Neville freaked out when he knew of Draco's true name, but calmed down after seeing how he was treated by Drake (AN: which will now be Draco's nickname).

The flock of students followed Minerva McGonagall. The stern transfiguration professor turned to face the students. "Through these halls, you will be sorted into any of the Four Houses: Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, and Slytherin. Each house has their own noble history. Your House will be your extended family. Your actions

will reflect upon your house and make you gain or lose house points. The House with the most House points at the end of the year will win the House Cup.” Harry rolled his eyes. How noble of them to inspire rivalry and resentment within their future pupils.

The huge doors swung open and they walked into the grand hall in two orderly columns. The Headmistress withdrew a rather long piece of parchment from her robes. “When I call your name, walk up and sit down on the stool and I will place the Sorting Hat on your head. Abbot, Hannah...Hufflepuff...Acrom, Melissa...Slytherin...” And so the Hogwarts Sorting began with the hat, in seemingly false enthusiasm, separated the new batch of freshmen.

"Amazing isn't it. The ceiling I mean. It's charmed to show the weather outside of the castle. I read it in Hogwarts: A History. It's a really fascinating..." Harry stopped listening to the bushy haired girl. A typical Ravenclaw if he ever saw one.

"Longbottom, Neville," Draco leaned towards Harry and whispered, "I bet you ten galleons he'll go into Hufflepuff."

"Ten galleons on Gryffindor." Harry replied.

"...GRYFFINDOR!" Grinning, Harry gracefully accepted the ten golden coins from Drake. "Potter, Harry..."

"Good luck, Harry." Draco said. Harry gave him a thumbs up before going forward and taking a seat. He felt the hat being placed on his head.

Ah, Harry Potter, I've been expecting you. You may call me Aethan. I am the Sorting Hat. The sorting hat said in his mind.

Harry was shocked at hearing it say its name to him. Perhaps, he gave it to all the students? No, Mr. Potter. Not many people know my name. To know it is an honor.

So...where are you going to put me? Harry asked Aethan mentally.

I don't know.

What do you mean?

I can't place you in any house.

Why?

Because you don't have a single house to which you would properly belong in.

Well, don't I have a trait that's stronger than the others?

Yes. You're more ambitious than brave, more loyal than ambitious, more brave than loyal, more intelligent than brave, and more cunning than intelligent.

Well, that got us no where Harry stated dryly.

Indeed. To put it simply, Mr. Potter, if the founders were still alive, they would fight over you. You are brave but not to the point of idiocy. Cunning and Ambition you have in no small quantity, but you put your morals and belief before it. Knowledge, you thirst for, but you do not allow it to devour you. In short, you are a near perfect student.

So, I can't be sorted.

Well, you can. I shall class you as an "APPRENTICE!" Looks of disbelief and astonishment passed over the faces of the professors while faces of confusion filled that of the students. Only a few students recognized what they heard.

Oh, Thanks a lot, Hat. You just practically screamed at Dumbledore telling him to make me a sidekick for Slivenson and my sister. I applaud you for your excellent decision at shouting out the extent of my knowledge; So much for hiding my true potential.

Live with it. Besides you need to learn how to be stealthier. This'll be excellent practice for the annoying fan girls you are bound to have. Most of them being curious Ravens, mind you And trust me those bookworms can get especially vicious in trying to find out how its like

to become an apprentice and how you did it. They'll literally tear you apart. Have a nice time at Hogwarts.

Harry took the hat off his head. "And Mr. Potter, come and see me in the Headmaster's office some time. It's dreadfully boring up there. Just tell the gargoyle and they'll let you in."

Dumbledore rose from his seat, regaining his composure. "Mr. Potter, you may sit and live in any of the four houses that you choose to reside in. But for formality's sake, please inform the Head of Houses before you do. You may attend any class with any First Year Group. You are required to take all of the Subjects. You have unlimited access to the Restricted Section as long as you check it out with Madam Pince. Congratulations on your acceptance of Apprenticeship. Hogwarts expects great things of you. I hope you do not let us down." Which to Harry meant 'I have several things planned for you and I will manipulate you into fulfilling it', Insert diabolical laughter here.

Harry nodded in understanding and went to the Gryffindor Table to sit beside Neville. The sorting continued with Draco in Slytherin (Unsurprisingly enough).

"Now that we have all been fed and watered, ('What does he think we are, Plants?' Harry asked Neville who laughed at his antics) some announcements have to be said. First, the Third Floor Corridor is forbidden and I advise you all to stay away from it unless you want to experience a horrible and painful death. ('Yeah, real cheery, telling us we could die at the beginning of the year. An excellent way to encourage us to stay in this school.' Harry said sarcastically making those around him break into hysterical laughter.)

Second, the Forbidden Forest is forbidden. ('Excellent analysis, Sherlock. The name kind of gives it away.' the muggleborns around Harry laughed.) No student is allowed to go into the Forest.

Third, there is a list of items that are banned from the Hogwarts premises. The list can be found outside the office of Argus Filch, caretaker. Now, off you trot." The Prefects led their housemates to their respective common rooms. The password to their common room

was 'Caput Draconus'. After being assigned a dormitory, the group of First Years dispersed and went to their dorms to unpack their things.

He was unfortunate enough to get stuck with Robert Slivenson, Ron Weasley, Seamus Finnegan, Dean Thomas, Neville Longbottom, Geoffrey Otis, John Crest, David Glem and Albert Sycom. Five of them were Slivenson's followers which assured the boy-who-lived a majority support in anything in the dorm.

Not exactly good news for Harry.

"Now listen up, I'm the boy-who-lived so I get to choose my bed first. I want the bed near the window. Weasley, Potter, set up my things." He ordered. Weasley went forward to comply immediately unable to deny his precious 'Savior' anything. Harry, however, had no such foolish notions.

"No" came his simple reply.

"Do you know who I am?"

"An annoying spoiled brat."

"I'm the boy-who-lived. I defeated the Dark Lord. I deserve your respect."

"Respect is earned, not given."

"I defeated the Dark Lord."

"So, I've heard. No, stop annoying me, I have better things to do then listen to your idle chit chat. And by the way, only followers of Voldemort..." He never finished his sentence as all the purebloods in the room jumped in fright. Harry smirked deviously. "I don't believe it. You're actually afraid of his name."

"No, of course not. Where did you get such a ridiculous idea?"

"Voldem-"

Before he could even finish the word, Slivenson hissed, "Don't say his name."

"Pathetic, you claim have defeated this Dark Lord but you're afraid of the mere mention of his name. Well, if your quite done at jumping at the sound of a dead man's name, I'm going to set up my things." Harry drew his wand and raised some wards around his bed and trunk to keep it safe. Then, he levitated his trunk and dropped it at the base of his bed. And so Harry started to unpack his things. After setting his Alarm Clock to 5 'o clock, he went to bed.

And so, Harry Potter started his adventure at Hogwarts. His journey had begun.

Like It? Hate It? Please Review.

Chapter Three: Classes

Harry woke up as his alarm clock beeped. Opening his eyes, he stood up from his bed and proceeded to do his new routine for Hogwarts. From 5:30 to 6:00, he would go down and run around the lake; 6:00 to 7:00 and practice against his brother in dueling and sparring; 7:05 to 7:15, he would shower and get ready. Starting from 7:20, he would eat his breakfast for twenty minutes. It was fairly organized. Years of training had gotten him used to having to get ready for things quickly. His brother had drilled that into him. So, every night, before he went to sleep, he would prepare everything he needed for the next morning. His clothes were to be laid out and his things assembled in his backpack.

For dodging, he had to evade the fan girls and their idle, irritating chatter. He had learned quickly on how to avoid it and had made every effort to do so. The Ravenclaws had done nothing yet, but he could tell they were waiting to strike. They were waiting for him to let his guard down, but Harry couldn't be fooled. He knew they were waiting, watching him like vultures.

To keep people away from his trunk and stop its defenses from killing them, Harry had decided to get in touch with his Rogue self. He had placed booby traps and pranks around his bed which could only be activated if someone with the intent of opening his trunk or tampering with his things and in general approached within three feet of his bed without his uninfluenced, expressed permission, given willingly and with his knowledge. It took quite a bit of time doing the rune work required.

Harry strode into the Great Hall. As soon as he did, every eye in the room was on him. "What are you all looking at?" He snarled vehemently. Everyone went back to what they were doing, frightened, glancing at him occasionally.

Harry sighed and took a seat beside Draco in the Slytherin Table. Taking a bite out of his toast, Draco greeted, "Harry, how wonderful to see you this fine morning."

"Draco, it's wonderful to see you too. But our Trio is, alas, still incomplete. Should I fetch Neville to eat with us?"

"Wouldn't that be against the school rules?"

"Drake did you even bother to look at the Hogwarts Rules? It states their clearly in Article 1, Section 1, Law 23, Paragraph 11 that 'Hogwarts is to remain always as a unified institution. The House System that has been organized prior to the opening of Hogwarts and in honor of the Founders, is merely to advance our students through competition. In no way is it to hinder the promotion of Inter-House Unity and or Relationships.' So the only person who has the right to go against us is Neville and I can tell you that he won't refuse. The Slytherins won't mind, he is a pureblood after all."

"Fine then, go and get Neville." Harry stood up and walked to the Gryffindor Table calmly. Before he got there, however, his sister (who is in Gryffindor just so you know) intercepted him.

"Hello brother. I see you have taken a liking to hanging out with the slimy snakes. Added to that, you've decided to try and steal my fame. Mom and Dad won't be happy about this, if the letter you are about to receive is any indication." Just then, the Owl Messengers arrived, swarming the air above the Hall. Hedwig, who Harry had forgotten to bring, dropped a letter on Harry and perched on his shoulder tactfully.

Catching the letter, Harry broke open the seal which concealed the message.

Dear Harold,

We are very disappointed in you for trying to take the focus of attention from your sister. Other than that, we would like to congratulate you in your status as an Apprentice of Hogwarts. You are the first of the Potters to achieve such an honor. Don't let us down.

Love,

Mother and Father

P.S. Would you mind tutoring your sister to get her a bit more advanced? We can't have that Slivenson boy outshine her.

Harry scanned the letter hastily before burning it to ashes. The formal tone in the letter wasn't lost to him. It was rather cold, but Harry was used to it by now. The words 'Dear' and 'Love' were merely for formality's sake as well. The congratulations were meaningless to him as it was a clear way to encourage him to bring more fame to the Potter Family. The tutoring part wasn't unexpected. They wanted their precious Katy to become magically adept ASAP.

He turned to face a smug sister. "They want me to tutor you. My answer is no." He said coldly. Her face turned ashen at hearing the word 'tutor'. She nearly fainted at hearing the word and so was unable to hear what he said next. Harry ignored her and went towards Neville. "Neville mate, come and join me and Drake." She was shaking when her friend had gotten her to sit.

"Sure thing, Harry, it's dreadfully boring here anyway, no one to talk to." Neville answered, slightly more confident than before. The influence of Harry and Draco were beginning to show. The two made their way to the Slytherin Table who accepted them both in with little hesitation. After all, not many of them were stupid enough to go against the combined might of an Apprentice and the Scions of Malfoy and Longbottom, both very old and respected Families in the Nobles Class of the Wizengamot. One which had loads of influence over the Slytherin House, mind you. It would be bordering suicidal to do so. They were the house of cunning and a sense self preservation was one trait you needed to get into the house.

"Harry, isn't this against the Hogwarts Bylaws?"

"No, in fact, this is perfectly allowed by Article 1, Section 1, Law 23, Paragraph 11 for the purpose of Inter-House Friendship." Draco responded, rephrasing Harry's original response.

"Right, gotcha." And so the three merrily ate their breakfast, confabulating (chatting) on as they did. And slowly, no matter how slow it was, the Slytherins warmed up to Neville. The Gryffindors,

however, were very much opposite in reaction. They had all but made him a pariah in their own house. Most of them were blind supporters of either Katy or Robert, following those two like sheep.

Of course, the professors (well, okay, to be brutally honest, it was Dumbledore with the assumed support of the professors seeing as they accompanied him in his attempt) tried to stop it. Key word being 'tried' meaning failed. It went on something like this:

"Mr. Longbottom, Mr. Potter, you two are not authorized to sit in the Slytherin Table. Am I understood?" Dumbledore asked, his eyes twinkling.

"Yes Headmaster." Harry and Neville replied in unison but still remained rooted in their seats.

"Mr. Longbottom, Mr. Potter, why aren't you two leaving yet?" McGonagall asked, a little impatient, it seemed, by the tapping of her foot.

"Why should we?" Harry asked.

"Because the Headmaster said that you two can't sit here."

"So what? Just because the Headmaster said something doesn't make it true. I mean if I said that the Slytherin House was evil, would it make it true?" Harry said, smirking deviously. He had trapped them. If they replied 'yes, it would be instigating a rebellion at Hogwarts. If they said no, they would be contradicting themselves.

"No, Mr. Potter, but this is not the same case. You will go to the Gryffindor Table, now." Dumbledore answered smoothly.

"Why there?"

"Because Mr. Longbottom is a member of Gryffindor House and thus rightfully belongs there." By now the entire population was listening intently at the ongoing battle of wits.

"I understand why Neville has to be there, but what about me?"

'Wouldn't you like to accompany your friend?'

"Yeah, but Draco is my friend as well. Do you think that by being a Gryffindor automatically makes someone more worthy than if you were of another house?" Harry was immensely enjoying this debate.

"No, Mr. Potter, but as it stands you must also leave the Slytherin Table."

Harry grinned to himself. They were placing the nails to their coffin. "Why? Maybe it's because you don't want me to associate with Slytherins because you have less influence here? Or because you don't want me going evil and turning Death Eater on you?" Harry was very proud of himself as to how he managed to trap them into this. Oh and the professors could now see the cunning within him. There was no doubt about that.

Deciding to deliver the final blow, Harry added, "Well, I can tell you Headmaster that I won't be going evil by befriending a Slytherin. Being a Slytherin doesn't make you evil or a Death Eater by default. Really, I had thought that the prejudice against this house was limited only to children who hadn't matured enough yet, but clearly I was wrong. This bigotry has spread to the adults, as well. Why, it'll only be a matter of time before you openly burn them at the stakes if this keeps going on." By now the Slytherins were mutinous and were about ready to break into a protest against the world.

"Headmaster, allow me to inform you that I am an apprentice and as such, I can opt to sit wherever I please. And according to Article One, Section One, Law Twenty-Three, Paragraph Eleven, you are not allowed to separate us simply because it is hindering the development of what would be a healthy Inter-House friendship. If you refuse to abide by a law set by the Founders, you shall be sacked immediately for supporting resentment between the Houses, sir." He took great care in emphasizing the words 'abide', 'law', 'Founders', and 'sacked'.

Suffice to say, after this particular incident, the professors steered clear out of his way. He had defeated them in a debate on the school

laws and none of them wanted to be subject to his rebuking. Not if they could help it. Snape was very impressed by him though observed him with a critical eye and a newfound respect for the boy. Through his observations, he noted that Harry was clever, cunning, sly, witty, responsible, cool and collected usually, confident, slightly brave and loyal, sarcastic, and above all, a Slytherin at heart. He would have to form his own opinions over time. Harry Potter was different from his father. Very, very different.

Gryffindor/Slytherin Transfiguration...

Harry, Neville and Draco sat at the back of the class. McGonagall stood in front, delivering her yearly speech to the class.

"Today class, we will be transfiguring matchsticks into needles. The incantation is 'Verto' which is Latin for transform. You may begin." Harry yawned and casually waved his wand over the matchstick. It turned into a long, sharp, pointy, silver needle. After that, he continued to help Neville and Draco.

McGonagall thought he was slacking off and asked him to perform the transfiguration. He did so with flying colors. He even did it silently, greatly impressing the Transfiguration Expert. It was considered as a very hard feat to accomplish. Especially for a First Year.

By the end of the class, only He, Draco, Neville, Daphne Greengrass, Blaise Zabini, and Theodore Nott were able to finish successfully, each receiving five points for their house. Well, except for Harry who technically didn't have one.

In Herbology, he and Neville departed from Draco and his Slytherin Friends. They worked great as a team and won the high praise of Professor Sprout for accomplishing the task of harvesting the vines of a Venezuelan Jungle Creeper within a span of thirty minutes. Not an easy task seeing as they had to cut through like a hundred vine which could grow back.

Defense Against the Dark Arts Classroom...

"...V-vampires a-are t-t-typically b-blood s-s-suckers. T-the m-m-most e-effective w-w-way t-to c-c-combat t-them is w-with g-garlic." Quirrell stuttered. "N-now V-vampires t-tend t-to l-live in c-clan l-like c-c-communities..." The stammering professor proceeded to tell them all about vampires...or at least what the Ministry authorized teachers to say in the course of an hour. By the time he finished, most of the class couldn't understand what he said.

Harry sighed at the poor quality of professors he was beginning to see. Clearly, Hogwarts was no longer the best school in the world.

Charms was, by far, the most embarrassing one for Harry. It all started during Flitwick's speech...

"Welcomed all, to my Charms Class. I am Filius Flitwick, Charms Master Extraordinaire. We will be learning about many wonderful things about Charms in this class." The small man said jovially. "For example, the Summoning Charm. The incantation is Accio." Flitwick stated, making a note fly through the air and into his hand. "Now Miss Brown, let's see what you have to share to Miss Patil, shall we?" Clearing his throat, he read, "Parvati, Harry Potter is so hot."

Harry blushed as he heard this. Neville and the now present Draco smirked to each other. Harry groaned. They were never going to let him live this down. The entire class burst into laughter.

"Now, enough of that." The class quieted down. "Today we will be learning the Levitation Charm: Wingardium Leviosa. The wand movement is swish and flick." The words "Wingardium Leviosa" could be heard from out side the halls of the classroom. Harry lazily waved his wand at his feather, silently charming it to fly. The feather shot up into the air and hovered in mid-air. The students ignored this as they had seen this repeated in the other classes and it had lost the same amazement in their eyes.

Flitwick, on the other hand, almost fell down from his stool in shock at the display of non-verbal magic. "Take twenty points to...well, whatever the House you're in for that wonderful presentation of silent spell casting and another five for accomplishing it on your first try."

Instead of helping the others, he pulled out the Book which held the title “Legacy of the Power: Magic”. It was, although under glamour from others’ sight and the true title only remained visible to Harry.

Chapter 1: Magic and Aether, their relation and difference

Many wizards and witches have never questioned why magic work. This is because of generations of taking things for granted. Few truly know about the existence of Aether and its difference from magic, since many have thought it to be one and the same or have inter-mixed it somehow.

Aether is the force which exists in another plane on an ethereal level that can directly or indirectly affect everything and everyone. It is merely the control of Matter and Anti-matter as some muggles would term it.

Magic is the power which exists in everyone, even the muggles. Muggles are just unable to access this power within them too often. Some Wizards have theorized that muggles are unknowingly releasing magic to strengthen their body in what is termed to them as ‘Adrenalin’ through which they can perform superhuman tasks such as carrying tons of metal, heightened senses, etc.

Magic is used to directly or indirectly manipulate, change, enhance, strengthen, multiply, or control anything in the physical world and things such as emotions, feelings, thoughts etc. Magic in itself cannot be created by humans. It can only be strengthened or refined (as stated in the Laws of Magical Strength by Albert Gerron, Magical Theorist, 1956) by rituals and the like. Magic is also not sentient. It can be measured, (the Spell Tryelleri Bolger invented by Wilbert Roddin, Danish Theorist and Spell Crafter, 1986) seen, heard, imagined, felt, sometimes smelt, traced, hunted, tracked, and even contained.

Harry stopped reading at that point, hearing the bell ring. He went of to Potions, the last class of the day. It was taught by Severus Snape, youngest potion’s master in History. He also had a rough history with Harry’s father, not something Harry was proud of.

Entering the classroom he, once again partnered up with Neville. Snape strode into the room with his billowing cloak waving in the air. Harry had always wondered how he did that. Perhaps it was a charm?

Snape then proceeded with his speech which was a simple twenty-nine words said rapidly. "There shall be no foolish wand waving or silly incantations in this class." Turning to face the class, "I can teach you to brew glory, bottle fame, and even put a stopper to Death" He said the last part wispily.

"Well, he certainly seems like a cheery chap." Harry remarked sarcastically. Draco, who was beside him rolled his eyes as one his best friends commented about his godfather. By this point, Snape had started to call their names from his list of students. He stopped at Slivenson's name.

"Slivenson, what would I get if I added the Powdered Root of an Asphodel to an Infusion of Wormwood?"

Slivenson, bold, idiotic Gryffindor that he was had the gall to answer back. "How should I know? Not all of us live in a bloody potion's lab everyday to brew stuff." Harry banged his head on the table. Snape sneered snidely at the boy.

"Twenty points from Gryffindor for blatant disrespect." Looking at the group of students, he said, "Potter Girl, where would I find a Bezoar?"

Katy shrugged her shoulders and answered back (stupidly), "I don't know, the Apothecary, maybe?"

"Five points from Gryffindor. It seems that the batch of students I have from the House of the Lion are dunderheads in this subject. Clearly the 'children-who-lived' thought they were above opening their textbooks. Potter Apprentice, what is the difference between Monkswood and Wolfsbane?"

"Except the name, none. It is also called Aconite by muggles and is used commonly in the creation of the Wolfsbane Potion." The perfect reply of said Apprentice came.

"And the answer to the other two questions?"

"Infusion of Wormwood and Powdered Asphodel Root create a powerful sleeping potion called the Draught of Living Death because of its particular effect on the person who consumes it to appear not breathing. A Bezoar is found in the stomach of a goat and can save a person from most poisons. Only a few poisons in the world can overcome it and still prove to be fatal such as Basilisk Poison or the Hungarian Halaoz Saliva." Harry responded flawlessly.

Snape had an impressed look on his face. "Professor, I've been wondering about something now and I was thinking that maybe you could answer my question. In the Vitality Serum, a person who takes it is imparted with a magical boost similar to that of a Sugar Rush. The person then suffers from magical depletion for long amounts of time which is one of the main reasons it is no longer widely used today. How come we don't use an Osmosis Inducing Ingredient like Naci Wood on the potion to shorten the effects to a few minutes, tops?"

"Because the Osmosis process would serve to neutralize the effect of the potion if applied afterward, thus, making it obsolete."

"Not if you do the process before the application of Pasgla Lukha during the two minutes in which you need to allow the potion to stabilize." Snape had a thoughtful look on his face.

"That just might work, Apprentice Potter. Come see me after class and we'll talk about it. Ten Points to well, whatever you house you are in for your excellent question. It seems that there is still hope for the Potters after all." The class sat there, dumbfounded. Snape had just given points to a Potter and praised one. Some of the student even fainted. It certainly was an interesting day. Harry Potter, first Apprentice of Hogwarts in over three hundred years, was changing the school. Little did he know that his question would spark a Revolution that would sweep the world in the years to come.

Though few could foresee it, the Potions Revolution of the 2000's (commonly called the Potter Potions Reformation in honor of Harry

James Potter, Lord of Ionos, was started in the Potions Classroom at Hogwarts on the year 2001 between Severus Snape and Harry Potter due to a classroom question. Harry Potter had asked why wizards hadn't improved on Potions which Severus Snape, Potions Master, brought, in turn, to the International Potions Mastery Guild (I.P.M.G.). In the following ten years or so a worldwide remodeling of Potions took place...

-excerpt from: "Great Events of Potions and Theoretical Discoveries of Elixirs", Chapter Ten: The Modern Revolution, First Edition, by Giovanni Certus, Approved by the I.P.M.G., Standard Potions History Book of Europe

Read. Relax. Review.

Chapter Four: Potions Mastery

Dumbledore sat in his comfy cushioned chair, pondering on the event that had happened in the past few days. He remembered the professors' reports and what he heard from Harry Potter troubled him.

He is growing to become an exceptionally powerful and intelligent boy. It is...disturbing to say that he is too advanced for his classmates. Sure he was an apprentice but for Merlin's sake, he had developed a possible theory on improving a potion at the age of eleven. He had shown potential in every field he had studied, even History of Magic! Why, when I was at school, I barely even passed the subject.

Severus had decided to acknowledge Potter's Apprenticeship Status and has started private lessons with Potter. Why I remember what he said just the other day... Dumbledore thought.

Flashback

"...And Severus, what can you tell me about young Harry?" Dumbledore asked inquisitively.

Snape sighed and looked at his fellow faculty members. "He's a prodigy. He has mastered theoretical aspects of my class to degrees that could match a Potion's Master of the Bronze Rank. He has already developed an improvement for the Vitality Potion. I'll be informing the Board of the Potion's Guild about this. If all goes well, he could very well be the youngest potion's master the world has ever seen. As we speak, he is brewing some Healing Potions for me." Looks of awe passed through the room. Healing potions were exceptionally hard to brew and to see that Snape had willingly left a student, a Potter no less, alone to brew it would mean he had immense trust in his abilities.

End Flashback

That was no good. Not good at all. If the boy was to turn to the Dark or join Voldemort, the Light would be crushed against the skilled boy. His power would only keep growing. Dumbledore thought grimly. In the mean time, I'll have to keep an eye on him.

Harry stood lazily upon the grassy field in which all the first years were on. He observed the other students reactions to this. Most of the Ravenclaws and the Granger girl were reading books about it. Hufflepuffs, timid as they were, were glancing nervously at the other houses. The Gryffindors and some Slytherins were boasting others about their prowess with a broom in the air. All in all, a completely boring lesson.

Madam Hooch approached the mixed group of First Years and gazed at them cautiously. "All of you, put your hand above your broom and say 'Up'" Harry did so, being the only one who succeeded, yet again, in the first attempt. Looking at the broomstick in a monotonous manner, he twirled it in one hand rapidly. His gaze shifted to his fellow classmates. Half of them had their brooms in their hands already. The ones who didn't resorted to picking it up by hand.

"Now, mount your brooms like this." Hooch commanded, showing the proper way on how to ride a broom. "On the count of three, I want all of you to push off from the ground lightly. Don't hover any higher than two feet." She said. They kicked off from the ground.

And of course, that's when disaster struck. Katy rose a bit too high. Harry wasn't surprised seeing as she didn't show any gift in flying. So it didn't astound Harry that she fell off her broom...twenty feet from the air. She broke her arm of course. After Madam Hooch took her to the Hospital wing, Slivenson and his band of sycophantic followers started to laugh at her expense.

Harry ignored this and stared at a small sphere in the ground. It was clearly left by his sister, but...what could it be? Before he could take it, however, Robert had decided to snatch it from the ground and make fun of his sister even more.

"Hey, guys look at this. Potter's got a Holo-Mapper. Maybe I'll leave it somewhere for her to find... like on top of the Astronomy Tower." A Holo-Mapper? Must have been a gift from dad. Those things are expensive. I should probably give it back to her. Harry thought,

mounting his broom. With a swishing sound, he zoomed towards Slivenson at a breakneck speed. The boy-who-lived reacted poorly by attempting to fly away from his pursuer. It was futile for Harry was better on the broom. In a desperate attempt to send him in another direction, he threw the ball into the air as hard as he can...straight into the Forbidden Forest.

Harry sped after it, accelerating to speeds of almost seventy miles per hour. He was pushing the broom to its limits and to do so excessively could mean the malfunctioning of the flying device. Narrowing his eyes, he tilted the broom downwards, using gravity to help him go down faster. Stretching out his left arm, he caught the spherical object and pulled up from his dive, executing a perfect Wronski Feint.

His fellow students stood their awed as he landed in their midst. Unfortunately, Madam Hooch, flanked by Snape and McGonagall, were briskly walking towards him.

Before he knew it, he was inside the Headmaster's Office waiting for his punishment, when to his shock, McGonagall and Snape barged into the room arguing over him and which Quidditch Team he should be in. He rolled his eyes at their petty conflict over his Quidditch Placement.

Harry looked at his wristwatch. The Deputy Headmistress and the Head of Slytherin House were still debating in shouts over which Quidditch Team he should be placed in for over an hour. The Headmaster's eyes were twinkling in amusement. He was sure that the sound the two were making could be heard outside. Sighing in irritation, he whipped out his wand and made a loud booming noise with it similar to that of a cannon being fired. The effect was instantaneous and the two professors ceased their petty quarreling.

Clearing his throat, Dumbledore said, "Thank you for that, Mr. Potter, though I'd appreciate it if you gave me some warning before you did that. Now, Harry will be joining the Slytherin House Team and Robert will be joining the Gryffindor House Team. This decision is final." He added quickly, stopping Minerva from complaining.

Harry carefully sliced up the Ginseng Root (which, amazingly enough, had magical healing properties as well) into small cubes. He dropped them into the bubbling cauldron three at a time with an interval of five seconds precisely. Turning the heat to 300 Degrees Celsius, he added a drop of Acromantula Venom, just enough to use the calming effect on a person. Cautiously lowering the temperature, he added a spoonful Distintamento Spice. The simmering stopped gradually. Stirring the liquid counter-clockwise, he waited until it turned into an olive green color. Taking a vial, he filled it up with the Mind Peace Draught, a powerful variation of the Calming Potion. He filled up a few more bottles and placed it in his Potion's Kit. Handing the vial to Snape, he vanished the remains in the cauldron. Snape accepted the vial, smiling appreciatively.

"Very good, Harry. You've completed your first potion variation. I shall be testing it to see how well it works. If something goes wrong, I'll give it back to you to alter. As soon as you're done, give it to me so I can submit it to the I.P.M.G. to request for your Bronze Cauldron Award. Along with your other theories on Potions and the improvements made on them, you are assured that at the very least." Harry smiled. It would be nice to have a Bronze Cauldron granted that it would give him some credibility in the world.

While it seemed sorely unrealistic that he could hypothesize over a dozen different theories, he had been working on it for five years without halt. Everyday for seven hours, he would jot down notes on his research and perform complicated Arrhythmic Calculations. In short, you could say he worked on it for 35,840 Hours or 1,420 Days. Not a small amount of time by most people's scale.

But Potions was an art which required dedication and hard work, by no means for the faint of heart and lazy. Harry packed up his things and was about to leave when his forehead pained. He dropped to the floor clutching his bleeding forehead. The pain had decimated his weak Occlumency Shields and was moving on to assault his mind.

Flashback- Eleven Years Ago, Demise of the Dark Lord

A dark cloaked man ambled through the festive Town of Godric's Hollow. Children and Parents alike kept their distance from this man

as they went of trick or treating. A cold aura surrounded the man and a dangerous glint was evident in his eyes. Stopping at what seemed to be an empty lot, he recalled his spy telling him the Location of the house.

The house materialized in front of him which caused him to grin manically. Stepping on the crisp grass, he disappeared to anyone outside of the Fidelius Wards. A casual flick of his wand ripped the door from its hinges. Grinning maliciously, he stepped into the house and brought his wand in a downward sweep, causing the Two Elder Potters and Slivensons (who were visiting at the time) to be thrown into a wall. Stepping over the unconscious, slumping bodies of Lily and James Potter, he made his way to the Nursery. Or at least what he perceived to be the general location of the Nursery. In his arrogance, he hadn't really bothered to find out where it was.

He blasted open the door of one room revealing it to be the library. Growling angrily, he strode down through the hall, blasting apart doors left and right in an effort to locate the three brats (not including Alex). Of course, he eventually found them...after taking apart half the bloody house and an hour of grueling door blasting.

Now Dumbledore, the Order of the Phoenix, the Aurors and generally the slow responsive 'Light Side' had not yet appeared. You want to know why? Because they were still mobilizing a Crack Team and forming a plan on how to apprehend Voldemort. Yeah, that's what they did for the span of one hour. Effective aren't they.

Now Voldemort had found the Nursery and entered it to see that all three babies were in a single crib. Tightly gripping his wand, he sent three Avada Kedavras at the toddlers. To his surprise, the two identical curses flew back at him. He ducked both of them and stood up only to be hit by another killing curse. Then he died. Or at least, his soul was removed from his physical body.

A piece of his soul entered Harry, which is the reason why he had accelerated knowledge and comprehension of things. Of course, instead of the Harry becoming a Horcrux, Harry had (literally) absorbed the soul and drained it of its usefulness before promptly crushing the soul with raw magic. This caused Harry to be rendered

unconscious. The two other brats were declared the children-who-lived half an hour later because of the indecisiveness of Dumbledore. Well, it doesn't matter seeing as the Wizarding world fell for it Hook, Line, and Sinker.

End Flashback

Harry awoke in the Infirmary dazed and bewildered. Snape and Alex were looking down at him. "What happened?" Harry asked, still confused.

"You collapsed in the Potions Lab." Snape replied.

"And before that, you screamed and gripped your bleeding forehead." Alex continued.

"What was the cause of it?"

"Poppy suspects it is due to a Stasis Held Mental Assault which reacted violently to an unknown substance in the Potions lab which caused the severe pain and bleeding." Severus said.

"Although it is possible you just had a severe migraine from over strenuous workloads which caused the headache. The bleeding isn't explained though." Alex stated

"Well, when can I get out of here?" Harry inquired.

"By lunchtime. You've been here for two days just so you know. It's Saturday which is the main reason you aren't being confined in this place for an extra day. But mind you, no more theoretical developments until the week is over. Understand?"

"Yes brother." Harry replied solemnly.

"Well, the good news is that three of your twelve theories submitted to the I.P.M.G. Board have been accepted. The Mind Peace Draught and the Stasis Potions have also been approved. They've declared that you be given a Bronze Cauldron Award and a Theoretic Medal for your potions and theories. Also, a worldwide meeting has been

called for in Switzerland on December 20 of all Potions Masters and is deemed as mandatory for the announcement of the Potter-Snape Improvement Act. I and Alex, who was your representative, drafted the legislature along with Nicholas Flamel, Andrew Dwight (American Magical Theorist who developed a quarter of the standing Potions Laws), and Mao Han Yi (Chinese Herbalist Expert famed for his discovery of the Ginseng Properties)."

"Because of your new status as a Potions Master of the First Degree, you are required to go as well. Not to mention the fact that you instigated this entire thing." Alex said. "I'll be going as well because of my Second Degree Mastery in Theory. Mind you, you're not the only one who's been working on Theories. Not that hard to get a Degree anyway if you study hard enough."

The Potions Mastery System had over Twenty Degrees (One being the lowest and twenty the highest) and five medals (Bronze to Diamond for theoretical or practical achievements of note worthy mentioning). All one had to do to get into the First Degree was develop a Potions Theory no matter how stupid it was.

The ease in which one could get into the Mastery Guild of Potions was because of the degradation of the standards set during the founding. Such was also the reason why the magical were lazy leading to its total halt in development.

The One Hundred and Fifty Sixth Mandatory I.P.M.G. was also the finalization and presentation of the 2001 Improvement Act which led to the creation of the Reformation Act. It was to strengthen the Potions that were currently existing in an effort to increase the effectiveness of Potions. It was, in the end, a failure. Though it is recognized as one of the most important events which led to the creation of the 2000's Potter Potions Reform.

-excerpt from: "Great Events of Potions and Theoretical Discoveries of Elixirs", Chapter Ten: The Modern Revolution, First Edition, by Giovanni Certus, Approved by the I.P.M.G., Standard Potions History Book of Europe

AN: The flashback part was seen from Voldemort's View but Harry can still see it as some memories of Tom Riddle were transferred to him as well. Please R and R.

Chapter Five: Quidditch and Trolls

Dumbledore sat upon the seat in the Staff's Area within the Quidditch Pitch, pondering on the last few days, Harry Potter being heavily involved in those thoughts of his. The boy was an enigma, so to speak. He had shown his capabilities, which were nothing short of Outstanding.

It had all started out when the boy came to Hogwarts. He was sorted into the Apprentice Class, not a house. It was then that first planted the seeds of doubt upon the minds of the students that the boy-who-lived was outdone. Of course, it wasn't this much of an issue then.

Now, nearly two months had past and he was starting to regret not interacting more with him while he was younger. Perhaps even make the boy look up to him. But, no, he had, sadly, kept his attention at the children-who-lived. Ever since the incident in the Great Hall, Dumbledore had decided it would be somewhat best to keep Harry's influence contained within Slytherin House. If things turned out as planned, he would be considered as a Dark Wizard.

But perhaps there was hope for the boy. His brother was a father figure to him. If he could be convinced to join, Harry would follow. But the most disturbing was the Mental Assault on Harry's mind. He had seen its type before.

And the only person who had ever done so was Voldemort. Paling, Albus Dumbledore was, for once in his life, afraid. Tom Riddle was in Hogwarts. And what was more, he was a wolf in sheep's clothing. If Dumbledore had bothered paying attention, he would have noticed that the Defense Against the Dark Arts Teacher was smiling deviously at him.

October Twenty, Hogwarts, Quidditch Pitch...

"Welcome all to the First Match of the season in Gryffindor VS Slytherin. Both teams have just received new seekers. Allow me to introduce Apprentice Potter and the BOY-WHO-LIVED!" The crowd cheered wildly at the mention of the two. Ever since the Quidditch incident, the First Year students had been split in two, Slivenson and

Dumbledore on one side and Harry on the other. Harry had several followers because of his Apprentice Status and his new Potions Degree while Slivenson and Dumbledore gathered their lot of sympathizers merely through fame.

"The Quaffle is released and both seekers have sped off after the snitch. Ouch, the Weasley Twins have just hit Flint with the Spiral Bludger. Flint is out of the game. Pucey is called in to replace the captain. Alicia Spinnet shoots, and she SCORES! Ten to Gryffindor.

Angelina Johnson takes the Quaffle from Bletchley...and a rather attractive girl. She is an excellent chaser as well."

"JORDAN!" McGonagall yelled.

"Sorry Professor." Jordan said meekly. "And look the twins have taken out Bletchley. Slytherin Team is now down by two members." Harry stopped listening at this point. He had been tracking the Snitch ever since the game started. Their only hope of a quick victory was by catching the Snitch. Gryffindor Team had superior Chasers and Beaters that, when joined, would decimate their team. As was shown in the first hour of the game when two of their original chasers, their beater, Keeper and reserve keeper were in the Infirmary. Apparently, the Gryffindors weren't very happy with them.

Ducking from the impending blow of a Bludger, Harry shot into a dive straight at the ground. He was trying to fool Slivenson that he had seen the Snitch. It worked outstandingly, seeing as the boy followed.

Five feet from the ground.

Three feet.

Two Feet and five inches. He pulled his broom up sharply and halted his fall while watching in satisfaction as the opposing teams Seeker crashed into the ground.

Silence, surprise and astonishment. It was the only words one could describe the atmosphere which seemed to have engulfed the crowd after seeing another Wronski Feint. Not only that, it was performed at

a distance of nearly two and a half feet. Glancing at Pucey, the current Captain after Flint's unfortunate incapacitation, he signaled for a time out which the Captain complied with.

Landing on the ground, he and the rest of his team (or what was left of it and a few replacements) gathered. "Pucey, we're getting slaughtered out there with these Reserves. Half of the Original team is gone. If we go back out there, we're dead."

"What do you suggest I do, Potter?! We have no Keeper and their Chasers are unstoppable. What would you have me do with them, knock them off their brooms?" Harry ginned evilly. "Bloody Hell Potter, you really do want to knock them out. Well how do we do that?"

"Leave that to me, just keep the Beaters occupied and cover me. Have one of your reserve Chasers switch with me. Its time to start playing like a real Slytherin, Pucey." The Slytherin Captain nodded vigorously in total agreement.

Turning to the rest of the team he said, "Higgs, take the Seeker Position and replace Potter. Potter, you're our new chaser. Monte, Clark, cover for Potter and do what he says. Higgs, Carter, you two are with me, try to take out Slivenson and delay him at all costs."

The group of six took to the skies to continue their aerial match against the Gryffindor Team. It was sad really, as if they were going to slaughter. The Score was already thirty to Two-Sixty with the Lion's in the lead. It was only by Slivenson's inability that they had not yet been defeated. The fact that there were only six of them (mainly because no one else wanted to become Keeper or even take part in the so far one sided massacre.) also hurt them in numbers.

Harry signaled to the beaters to follow him. The three few in a tight V Formation with Harry in front and the two flanking him at either side. They were headed straight for the two Weasleys.

While being twins made the two stronger as a team, it also had the disadvantage on being unable to work effectively with someone else. Well, with someone else they didn't know too well anyway.

The two beaters started to whack the Bludgers at the Weasleys, distracting them, as Harry flew beneath them to avoid being seen. Pucey and his group were still successfully distracting Slivenson and a Chaser, but that still allowed the other two to take free shots at their goal.

Accelerating his broom, he sped upwards and tailed after the two Chasers, Angelina Johnson and Katie Bell. Harry swiftly flew past the two on his vastly superior Nimbus 2000 (well it is superior compared to their Comet 360s) and swiped the Quaffle from Bell.

Turning around, he threw the Quaffle at Johnson while flying towards her at high speeds. Of course, this caused Angelina to panic, not being used to Slytherin aggressiveness yet, since she was always protected by the beaters, and got knocked off her broom by the impact of the heavy ball. Bell, noble Gryffindor that she was, went after her falling teammate.

Harry just took the Quaffle and began flying towards the Gryffindor Goals. Standing up, he threw the Quaffle into the air, before doing a flip and kicking the ball in mid-air. The Walnut colored ball struck hard, passing through a goal and shoving Wood into a goal ring when the Keeper tried to stop it.

And this was when Gryffindor made its biggest mistake...ever, making Slivenson captain of the team. He had no leadership skills (as of yet anyway) and got the Gryffindor Team flying around the pitch in an unorganized fashion. Essentially, it made destroying the Lions easier.

In the end, the game worked out pretty well for them even though they didn't win. Slivenson took over two hours of chasing to finally catch the Snitch. The two teams tied with Four Hundred Sixty Points each. Gryffindor had most of their team hospitalized (thanks mainly to Harry and the Beaters) with only Slivenson and the two Weasleys remaining in the end of the match.

Harry entered the Slytherin common room, deciding to reside there ever since his entry in the Slytherin Team, and was met by a wave of cheers and greeting. Most likely because of his Quidditch

Victory...well Stalemate if you wanted to be technical about it. Waving at Draco, he joined him, Daphne, Blaise and Theodore at their table.

"Harry Mate, how you doing?" Draco asked.

"Pretty well, Drake. So what have you been up to these past few days? I haven't seen you around."

"Ah, you know hanging out with Neville. By the way, I'd like you to meet my friends, Theodore Nott, Daphne Greengrass, and Blaise Zabini. Guys, this is Harry Potter, but I'm sure you all know him. I mean who doesn't, especially with the pounding he gave Gryffindor last week."

"How nice to see you, Harry." Daphne said.

"Hello, Harry." Theodore greeted.

"A pleasure to meet you at last, Harry" Blaise said.

"It's nice to good to see you all too. Shall we head down to the Great Hall? I'm sure Neville and my brother is missing our company." The rest nodded in silent agreement and it wasn't long before they reached the Hall.

"And it seems that Neville has found some new Lady friends to talk to." Harry commented, noticing that Neville was sitting beside two girls.

"Ah, it does seem like that indeed. I believe they are Hannah Abbott and Susan Bones. Am I correct, Daphne? You know them better than me."

"Hmm, yes that's them all right. Let's join them." And join them they did... sort of. It was more like they shocked Neville and just sat down with them. The group was talked about the Quidditch match the other day when Quirrell barged into the Hall.

“TROLL! Troll, in the dungeon! Just thought I'd let you know.” He fainted forwards.

Harry turned to Draco and said, “Do people faint forwards?” Draco shrugged nonchalantly. Screaming could be heard as students ran around in panic. It was chaos.

Well, it was until our oh so esteemed Headmaster decided to stop the havoc being caused. “Silence. Prefects, please lead your fellow Housemates to their respective Dormitories.”

But before they could turn to leave, Draco yelled, “Are you insane!? In case you haven't notice, the troll is kind of in the dungeons, you know the place where our Dorms are located?”

“Well, perhaps you're right Mr. Malfoy, all First to Third Years will stay in Gryffindor Tower, Fourth and Sixth Years in Ravenclaw Tower and the rest will sleep in the Hufflepuff Haven.” He instructed. Harry groaned at this new announcement. The man was practically sending them to their deaths.

And this was what caused some sort of twisted chain of events which led to the group of eight fighting against Two Mountain Trolls. Harry wasn't sure how this had happened, one moment they were walking down the corridor with the rest, then a group of trolls charged at them with clubs raised in the air.

Harry rolled away from another would be impact of a Troll's club, while raising his wand to deflect the chunks of rock flying in the air. It was times like this that Harry had thanked God for giving him the idea to bring potions with him. Uncorking a vial which held a fair bit of Blood Freezing Potion, he threw it at a nearby Troll.

Now the Blood Freezing potion caused one to become perfectly still or sluggish in movement. Trolls were no exception from those which could be affected. The troll who was hit in particular, dropped its club on its head. Its massive body fell to the ground with a thud. It caused some shaking which was a mixed blessing. It alerted the teachers of the Troll's presence at the same time caused Harry to fall down because of the shaking.

Getting back up on his feet, he waved his wand and created a Shield Rune in front of him and Draco. The Rune lit to life and made an invisible wall, impenetrable from physical attack, in front of Harry. This worked rather nicely as it gave him the time he needed to gather his strength.

His eyes darkened into Frost Blue. A glazed look appeared over his eyes. An atmosphere of frigid atmosphere settled. Harry turned to glare at a nearby Troll. Clapping his hands, it froze up. A Blue Blade made of Frost appeared in his hands. With impassive vigor, he slashed at another Troll's club, causing it to snap in two. Sadly, the troll seemed to be on a suicidal rampage as it broke through the protective rune and flung Harry into a nearby wall. Draco soon followed and rendered the Slytherin unconscious.

Before the troll could squash the two like a bug, however, Neville and the rest were firing off some jinxes at it. While it was completely useless, it did serve to distract the mountainous brute. Enough time for Harry to get up and throw blue orb sizzling with energy. The sphere exploded, crackling with energy and made the troll stagger. It also made his friends and he to collapse from magical stress.

Alex and Snape rushed into the hall firing curses of their wands. The remaining Troll was forced into another hallway.

And the remaining professors chose this extremely convenient moment to charge in...only to find that the troll was gone.

Clearing his throat, Dumbledore asked, "Mr. Potter... I suppose this is your doing?" Alex nodded.

"That it is Headmaster." He lied, covering for his brother. He very much doubted that Harry wanted others to know of his new ability. Pointing to a nearby hallway, he continued saying where the other troll was.

"Very good, Mr. Potter. Fifty Points to Ravenclaw for outstanding calmness in the face of danger and a spectacular show of bravery. Now bring your brother to the infirmary." Dumbledore said, leading

the teachers to battle against the Brutish Mountain Creatures. Alex obeyed. Draco and Neville went back to Gryffindor Common Room.

Good Lord, Harry. What have you gotten yourself into this time. Alex thought.

Perhaps the most amazing powers a person such as Harry Potter, Lord of Ionos, could have had was his skill to manipulate the power of Water and Ice turning them from form to form to effectively combat enemies greater than him, although this particular form of Magic is very draining as seen in the Trollean Break in of Hogwarts, 2001, October 31.

-excerpt from: The Pioneers of Modern Magical Europe, Chapter Two: Lord Harry James Potter, by Mathilda Rodclan, Standard European Modern History Book.

Chapter Six: Death Eaters!

Katy Potter was the girl-who-lived, one of the Chosen, famous celebrity of England and Second Heir to the House of Potter. But none of that had mattered in the last few days. Her sycophantic followers had deserted her. In a few days, she had become one of the most friendless children at school. The only ones who decided to still stay friends wither was Hermione Granger, resident Gryffindor bookworm. There were a few others she didn't care to mention as they were there for her fame. It wasn't as if Katy needed her help. No, far from it you see, it was because she proved to be a loyal friend, more so than others. And her brother, well, she didn't know what to think about her brother. She had never spoken to him civilly since they were eight.

Though much as she would want to say that it was because she was only human and the fame got to her head, it wasn't the entire reason. The fault was partially with her for although she was famous, she didn't have to treat her brother so badly. He was still family after all. And so on that day, Katy Potter vowed that she would try to make it up to her brother.

Over the next few days at Hogwarts, there was only one word to describe what happened, chaos; pure and simple. It all started on that fine November morning, when the Hogwarts Post arrived. The Headline was very precise about the story which drew many students in. Oh it went on like this:

DEATH EATER Insurrection begins!

Earlier today, Death Eaters (forces of you-know-who) started a country wide attack. They have raided several wizarding and muggle villages on midnight. Over five hundred wizards and witches died as well as numbers going up to a hundred muggles were massacred simultaneously. Auror Command has moved in forces to contain this new threat.

The Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, stated in a private interview that "the enemy would be stopped by the end of the month and that this little rebellion will be put down quickly. Meanwhile he has asked

the local villages to form up Defensive Leagues to support Aurors in the battles. Death Eater Forces are estimated to be numbering over a thousand of the Dark Lord's Chaos Seekers (Veterans from the First, highly experienced and dangerous, can successfully cast the killing curse). Aurors are being rushed into the rural areas as we speak...

-By Rita Skeeter, Daily Prophet Special Reporter

Harry snorted as he read this. He wasn't so much afraid of the Death Eaters as he could hold his own against them. Plus, the Ministry had decided to let Skeeter woman write about it. They would probably have been better off stopping mass panic if they announced their official surrender to the Death Eaters on the Wireless. And the Public would take that so well. If you thought about it from a realistic point of view, there were probably about only a hundred that were killed.

Of course, while he was quietly reading his paper and sipping his Pumpkin Juice, the students around him were screaming and running around in circles as Professors tried to calm them down. I mean, for God's Sake, even Slytherins were panicking and they were supposed to be the House of the collected and Calm of Mind. You could just see the calmness in them. Really! I mean what better way to show calmness then...running within the Great Hall, shouting bloody Armageddon and causing more panic.

Getting bored at his fellow classmate's fright, he strode to where his brother sat. "Alex, what do you think about the paper?"

"The Ministry will probably mess something up. I wouldn't be surprised if the Ministry loses the war. The current kill/death ratio is five Aurors to a Death Eater. There are over five hundred Aurors in active duty, a thousand in reserve duty, two hundred retired veterans, and six hundred Civil Guards. If the Prophet is accurate, and let's face it, it isn't, then the Death Eaters might win though not likely. Anyway I have to go get ready for my Hogsmeade Outing. Want me to buy something for you?"

"Yeah, get me twenty sets of Unbreakable Crystal Vials."

“Sure thing and read up on your book, Legacy of the Power. Read chapter seven again and you’ll know what your new powers are.” Alex said, smirking, making Harry pout cutely.

“Why can’t you just tell me what it is?”

“Because if you want something, you have to work for it. Besides where would the fun be if I told you.” Alex said, leaving.

It was typical that the Ministry allowed them to hold Hogsmeade Outings still. They wanted to raise the morale of the people. It was stupid of them to do so, however, as it would be a perfect Death Eater target. Students would be like sitting ducks out there.

Grumbling, Harry took out his thick tome and flipped through the pages. Stopping at page three hundred sixty four which had the words CHAPTER X in bold print, he read the title. His eyes widened as he saw it. Elemental Powers was the title.

Chapter X: Elemental Powers

Elements are innumerable. There is no limit to its capacities and is a powerful, yet highly obscure branch. This will be one of the few credible tomes you will find on it.

Elemental Powers are wielded by people known as Elementals or Eltummagi. This branch is highly dangerous and rarely can be controlled as it requires an exceeding amount of power to fuel. Most Eltummagi have been known to suffer magical exhaustion days after they unleashed their magic in such destructive force.

To further classify this branch, the Elements have been put around seven Core Elements known as Fire, Water and Ice, Lightning, Earth, Air, Darkness, and Light. Any and all elements are put under one of the seven. A person can be identified as an Elemental by their eye color which changes during use of the power into a State known as the Nature Stance. It is hard to maintain your normal mind during this state though it can be done. This is known as the State of Composure as it requires total calmness to achieve it. A person can further

strengthen their control over this power by using a Druidic Scepter or weapon (wands are exclusive to this).

Harry spent the next three hours reading through the chapter, fascinated and completely absorbed of the contents. Neville and Drake had futilely tried to bring him out of this state but were quickly repelled as Harry jinxed them to be unable to come three feet of him.

Shrieks filled the air and broke Harry's concentration. Looking towards the ceiling, a skull with a serpent circling it was hovering above the castle. There was only one thing that that could mean. Hogwarts was under attack by Death Eaters. And they were taking no survivors.

Hogwarts wasn't faring so well. A group of two hundred Death Eaters had attacked the school. What was worse, they were led by Augustus Rookwood, a well known Death Eater Elitist and an Azkaban escapee. He was a master in Dueling and was at the same level of Flitwick.

A hundred Death Eaters had surrounded the grounds, laying siege to the Hogwarts walls (which were being manned by arrow firing statues and charmed suits of armor). The Gate was under fire from the other half. Dumbledore and his staff would be no match for them and had called for all the students to evacuate.

To their dismay, they could not escape through their conventional and not so conventional means. Harry shut his book and summoned his wand. With a quick swish, a ramming spell hit the door of the Great Hall, sending ten very unfortunate Death Eaters flying through the air. The Door began to break. It seemed a small group of Death Eaters had found a way in.

Panicking, he hastily called for Hedwig to come to him while he set up his entire Potions Reserve Kit. There were a few Calming Potions and Mind Peace Draughts, some vials of Vitality Potion, and a Blazer Solution. The last was the one which caught Harry's attention. A Blazer was one of the hardest Potions to make. It was renown for its particular ability to explode and send fireballs from the explosion causing the things to burn up. It had similar effects to that of a muggle grenade.

His snowy pet arrived. Taking the Vitality Potions, he tied it onto the feet of his carrier. "Hedwig, Hogwarts is under attack and Hogsmeade might be as well. Take these potions to Alex and he'll know what to do. God Speed, Hedwig." He whispered to the owl, as if it were a real person. Well, to be perfectly fair, it did understand him and knew of the importance of the Potions. The owl glided away from the castle.

Pocketing the Blazer, he gulped down a Calming Potion. It wouldn't be very good if he was nervous when he fought. A blast knocked him onto his back. Smoke filled the large dining chamber he was in and stunners were flying every which way. Probably a kidnapping raid. Clutching his wand, though still on the floor, he tapped it on the Blazer. The Potion turned into a sickly red color as Harry threw it towards the entrance.

He took cover behind a table just as another explosion shook the school. He tentatively surveyed the area. Three Death Eaters were dead on the floor. More screams could be heard. He ducked behind a table which blew up sending splinters of wood all over. Harry rolled away and stood up again to face a Death Eater.

Grinning, the masked man sent a Cruciatus Curse at him. Harry wasn't prepared and was hit painfully. He might have been a Prodigy and had a lot of training, but he was by no means an expert. The pain was agonizing. It seemed to go on forever...enough to a point where Harry thought he would rather die. The pain left immediately as it appeared, allowing Harry to refocus his vision. In reality, he was only under it for a minute when it felt as if an eternity had passed. Such was the effect of the curse.

Having acquired his ability to see again, he noticed that the Death Eater was being brutalized by his pet owl which had returned. He flicked his wand slightly and sent a Sweeping Charm at the Death Eater's feet...bringing said person down to the hard floor and caused the Death Eater to lose consciousness .

This would all have been great...had it not been for the fact that there were four others who were blasting curses at him like no tomorrow.

He could barely dodge them all and any shield he made was too weak. To fight back was to ask for Death. A streak of green light blasted towards Harry.

Harry closed his eyes waiting for the darkness to claim him. It never did come. Opening his eyes, he saw Hedwig dead on the floor in front of him. Intense grief took over his heart as he saw the lifeless body of his long time companion dead. Tears filled his eyes. The grief turned into sadness then anger against the enemy. His eyes flickered dangerously making the dark robed men take involuntary steps backwards.

Summoning his wand from the floor, he sent an over-powered blasting spell at them. All four tried to dodge, but it was futile. The spell blasted them apart giving them some broken bones. In blind fury, Harry used several slicing curses at the terrorists. He almost succeeded in executing them had it not been for the fact that someone had stopped his spells. Looking up, he noticed several Aurors streaming in and dispatching the Death Eaters in an organized fashion.

None of that mattered now anyway. No to Harry at least. He picked up the dead body of his pet

One hour ago, Hogsmeade...

Alex and Cedric walked into a nearby Apothecary shop. Carefully observing the neat stacks of crystal phials, he selected some and bought them, as requested by his brother. Cedric had bought a new weighing scale. The two headed outside and were about to enter the next shop when a terrifying boom reverberated through the air. A speeding dark reddish light struck the a nearby shop, blowing it and everything inside it to pieces.

Alex and Cedric went into Dueling stances and engaged the weaker Death Eaters while Aurors started Apparating in. A massive firefight ensued upon the once peaceful village.

Alex threw up another shield as two identical curses hit it. The shield wavered and Alex stumbled back. Cedric threw a stunner at a Death

Eater while Alex sent chunks of rocks at them. This was all the distraction they needed to start running towards Hogwarts. A white owl which Alex recognized as his brother's flew towards them from the opposite direction and dropped two similar glasses filled with a yellow colored liquid.

Very clever Harry, sending us Vitality Potions. It would be useful to run the last mile. Taking one phial, he drank the liquid as Cedric drank the other. A surge of energy past threw them as they started to run hastily while throwing an occasional stunner and raising a shield.

A silent swish of his wand caused the ground behind them to rumble and shake violently. Grinning, Alex and his Hufflepuff friend jogged hurriedly towards Hogwarts. They were the last ones to arrive seeing as they and a majority of the Seventh Years were the ones covering the retreat (wild scramble) to the Castle. By the time they got there, the Aurors were already securing the castle.

The Death Eaters made a mistake of trying to do two simultaneous attacks which were uncoordinated by their chain of command. It wasn't long before the Death Eaters were captured and sent to Azkaban for a nice, long stay in the dark, dreary place.

In the ancient times of Merlin, there were six other wizards with him whose names have been lost throughout history. Unknown to many, each of them established a form of government under that of Merlin's Ministry (Ministry of Magic). However, after the great debacle of 1256, these six governments were named to be separate of the state. The Irish Region evolved to become the New Irish Magical Administration. The rest have not yet claimed a leader. The states are as follows: Ionos (dominion over the Islands of the East), Azkaban (dominion over remaining islands around the mainland), Walzer (dominion over the Independent Scottish Regions), Cartio (dominion over the Western Lands of Free Wales), and Scyther (Eastern England).

-excerpt from: The Government of Magical Britain and its changes through History, Chapter XXIII: The Autonomous Leagues, by Andrew Bagshot.

Please Review

Chapter Seven: Conversations and Letters

The days after the attack had been hard for Harry. He had barely gotten through his classes with the same quality as before. This caused a sharp drop in his grades; one that didn't go unnoticed by the teachers. He had to be given daily shots of Calming Potions which prevented his magic from going wild through the calming effect. If they hadn't, all Hell would have broken loose. He had gotten over the death over his beloved pet, though the subject was still touchy. His friends knew this.

Harry had sat in his usual seat in Slytherin with Draco who was ranting about some muggleborn named Hermione Granger. To be honest, he was getting sick of it. Neville was barely listening to the raving blond. Other Slytherins showed their support of his clear use of the derogatory term 'mudblood' and their inferiority.

"...are obviously inferior to us of pure heritage. Right Harry?" Draco asked.

"No Draco. You are, in fact, incorrect in your assumption that muggleborns are inferior to us, magically and intellectually speaking." Harry replied, disagreeing.

"What! How can you say that Harry?!" The pureblood asked in outrage.

"What proof do you have that they are inferior to us?"

"They are impure of blood!"

"So what?"

"So? So, that means they aren't worthy of the gift of magic!"

"Why?"

"Because they don't have magical blood."

“Blood, in itself, is not what carries magic. Blood is the life sustainer, and through it, magic flows through the body. That is why Bloodmagic is deemed as Dark. But that is not the point. Aside from being ‘impure of blood’ as you so eloquently quoted it, any other reasons you may have?”

“Well, no.” Draco said, albeit hesitantly.

“Good, now that we have that settled, and you have no other reason as to why muggleborns are not ‘worthy’ of magic, then they are clearly deserving of said gift. Eliminate all other factors and the one that remains must be true. Not only that, they are also not inferior to us.” By now, the two had attracted the attention of most of the Slytherins. Many who were interested how this debate would go. “Hermione Granger for example. As you yourself personally testified, the proof of its reliability is therefore under no scrutiny or question right now.

She is better than you in most classes barring Potions and DADA. She is better than most of us in most subjects. She is speculated to be Head Girl of our batch by several professors just from her current performance quality. She is a natural researcher, dedicated to studying, but isn’t in Ravenclaw. Why then is it like that?” Harry asked. Draco sat down and pondered over what his friend said. It was very reasonable and to argue without logic was to not argue at all. That was demanding that your point of view be made supreme and the method didn’t go well with many of the wiser students.

Harry continued eating with a satisfied smirk. The seeds of doubt were planted deeply upon their minds. It wouldn’t be long before some openly saw them as equals. Then, the treatment of muggleborns would get better. And as the saying went, “The children are the future”. It would start the gradual disintegration of prejudices against muggleborns. Well, at least to a more endurable level.

Just then, McGonagall approached him. “Mr. Potter, the Headmaster has required your presence at his office immediately.” The stern woman led him to the Old C...Ahem, Headmaster’s Office. The password was typically simple that anyone who knew the Headmaster’s favorite candy would have guessed it.

Into the private chamber of the Headmaster they went. Dumbledore and the other head of houses were there. The slightly senile Headmaster had that annoying twinkle in his eyes, Harry noted. He must be up to something.

“Now, Harry, tell us what you did yesterday?” Dumbledore half asked, half demanded.

“I...I fought...I fought them.” He said shakily. He was still a bit shaken about the death of his friend.

“That’s it?” Dumbledore asked with a hint of slight disappointment.

“What more do you want me to say? That I unleashed some sort of Ancient Magic against them? You people had your wands and you barely took twenty of them. Need I mention the fact that you are more powerful?” Harry asked.

“Very well, Mr. Potter. And five points from Slytherin for your cheek. You are dismissed.”

Harry left the office and went down the spiraling staircase...only to be caught by his own sister. She looked surprisingly hesitant. “Harry, c-can we talk?” She said, stammering.

Harry narrowed his eyes. “Why?” He said coldly.

His sister visibly shuddered at the icy tone he used. “I just want some time. Five minutes that you listen to me is all I ask.” She pleaded.

“Fine.” Katy let out a sigh of relief as she led him into a random room for some privacy.

After casting some well placed silencing wards, Harry motioned for his sister to start. “I guess I should start why I asked to talk to you. Well, it first began a few days ago. I had realized that...that I wasn’t really nice to you when we were younger. We never got along and barely talked since we were seven.

I guess it's because I let my fame get into my head. But even so...I shouldn't have been so arrogant. The fact that my...our parents spoiled and favored me didn't help. In hindsight, they were unfair to you in so many ways that it's just not right. I just wanted to ask for your forgiveness and to hope that we can be on friendlier terms."

Harry observed her calculatingly. "Well...you're sincere about the apology thing that's for sure." Katy's face brightened up at hearing this, obviously filled with hope. "As for forgiving you, it's not that hard either but it will take some time."

"I'm not expecting you to forgive me right away. Just...just to maybe someday forgive me."

"Well, I suppose we could be friends." Harry said warming up to her a bit. "So tell me about yourself."

"What? The great and revered brother of the girl-who-lived doesn't even know about her sister?" She asked in mock horror.

Harry smiled at her sisters dramatic antics. "But, why should I start with my life Harry? Why don't we start with yours?" Katy asked. "I'm Katy Potter, girl-who-lived, nice to meet you."

Deciding to play along with his sister's little game, he replied, "I'm Harry Potter, Holder of an Order of Merlin Third Class, Bronze Cauldron and a Theoretic Potions Medal. I'm eleven, I like flying and my proudest moment in Quidditch would have to be beating up the Gryffindor Team in retaliation. Although humiliating Slivenson is a close second.

I have a fair amount of knowledge in all Fields taught at Hogwarts," at this Katy raised an eyebrow, "okay fine I have a good amount of knowledge in all fields of Magic taught at Hogwarts with the exception of Music. I like dueling and honing my skills. I have a few talents and hidden skills. I am currently a third year in Dueling, at best.

I'm friends with Draco Malfoy, Neville Longbottom, Daphne Greengrass, Theodore Nott, Blaise Zabini, Cedric Diggory, Susan Bones, and Hannah Abbott."

“Well, I don’t really like to fly. I have a Third Year comprehension of most subjects except Potions and Herbology. I’m a Second Year Dueler. I’m friends with Hermione Granger, Lavender Brown, Parvati Patil, and Ron Weasley.”

“Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley? Maybe we should bring our friends together. Those two added with Draco Malfoy will be the cause of many amusing and loud arguments. Its a good thing I mastered the Noise Block Charm.” Katy shook her head at her brother’s slight twisted way of funny.

“Be careful of Parvati and Lavender though. Those to get all squeamish whenever your brought into topic. To actually meet you would be overkill for them. I shudder at the thought of the consequences.” Harry chuckled. And so was the start of the friendship between the two siblings. Old Feelings thrown aside for new ones to grow upon.

Harry approached the Owlery, intent on sending his reply to the goblins. He had just received confirmation.

Dear Mr. Potter,

This letter is in response to your previous request for a Blood Inheritance Test. We have acknowledged and accepted your request for a minimal fee of one hundred Galleons. Your request for a Full Right Grant has been accepted and will be activated by the end of your first year. However, the Ministry has decided to short range your access and you are allowed access to only an eighth of what you could acquire. The rest will be released upon reaching Majority or the success of an Emancipation Permit.

Stonegrip, Senior Member of the Goblin Request Agency,

Gringots Wizarding Bank, Europe, Magical United Kingdom, Diagon Alley Branch.

It would actually give him several advantages such as being able to assign himself a guardian, which was required by the law. He also

had unrestricted access to some funds. Useful if he wanted his plans to move forward. Most of them required money. Fame, Prestige, Respect and other similar things were taken of by his achievements. It wasn't spectacular but enough to make sure that his name in itself had a fair bit of weight amongst the middle and higher Economic Class.

Another letter was in his hands fresh from delivery.

Mr. Harry James Potter (Theoretic medal, Bronze Cauldron):

Your presence has been asked for by Cornelius Fudge, Minister of Magic, at the celebration of his Birthday (December 30). You are to attend in formal dress robes with all awards. You are required to bring along one guest in the event that you do choose to attend said event.

RSVP (Répondez s'il vous plaît)

Much Thanks,

Howard Stilt, Junior Undersecretary

Obviously, Fudge wanted to secure his support. He was, after all, one of the 'heroes' that showed an extent of the Minister's incompetence. To receive his support would mean reaffirming his power base. In the event that that happened, it might prove to be an advantage. After all, Fudge would cling on to him and falter at his demands. The Ministry's help would useful.

But like every other situation, it had a disadvantage as well. Should Fudge's Reputation come crashing down, Harry would be dragged with him as well. That would be unacceptable. Perhaps it would be best if he brought Fudge down himself. No, that would be risking too much and might cause a mini political war. He wasn't prepared for such yet. It would be best if he gathered enough support to oust him in one fell swoop. To do that, he would need some one in the inside, working to bring down the Minister.

That might work well. Very well indeed. The Minister was becoming too incompetent. They needed someone to effectively lead the country against this Rebellion.

The Lord of Ionos' earliest and most spectacular achievements before the Magical State War (also known as the World Serpent Conflict) was the successful ousting of Cornelius Fudge. Most of this was due to his ability to find damning evidence. The most particular one which sealed Fudge's fate was the direct violation of the Independent States Treaty of 1685.

-excerpt from: Great Leaders of Modern Magical Government, Chapter III: The Lord of Ionos by Evan Stanther

The Magical State War is considered by many as the Third Magical World War which was mainly fought in Europe and England. The rest of the world was affected due to the allegiances of the Independent States as well as independent interests of influential factions. It started during the Resurrection of Tom Marvalo Riddle who went under an alias as Lord Voldemort.

-excerpt from: Wars which changed the World, Chapter XXX: World Serpent Conflict by Evan Stanther

Like It? Hate It? Please Review.

Chapter Eight: The Argument and the Ball

The moron known as the Minister of Magic sat in his office musing about ways to grab more power within the Wizengamot. He had been so convinced that Dumbledore was trying to take over. There were nearly 257 members. All of them fell into any of the following groups: The Ancient Families, The Nobles, The Pureblood Supremacist or the Newly Rich, The Ministry Heads and The Platinum Scholars.

Thirty-two of them openly supported Dumbledore and another fifty-six would support him in secret. Seventy-eight were under Fudge's Banner. Seventy-two of the Legislative Body were part of the 'Dark Families and thus under Lucius Malfoy. The Independent 'Pro-Light Voters' were limited to a mere nineteen. They usually held the deciding votes in any Law.

This is not good. Dumbledore has been gathering more and more support. I can't let him do that unless I want to risk a major split in my party. Delores and her coworkers have been voicing their opposition to the more lenient Werewolf Rights that have been passed. I have to repeal those soon.

But how to stop Dumbledore...Potter! The new Prodigy I've been hearing of. The boy had had attained the sympathy of several. His support would be enough for this. Yes! I shall speak to him on my party about this. And with his aid secured, the Light will be severely split by the shock of a Light Family siding against Dumbledore. It will be enough for the repeals to be made.

"Come on Drake, we're going to miss the train." Harry said, levitating his packed trunk. He had decided to stay with the Malfoy's during the Christmas Holidays. His father had asked him to spy on them and see if he could uncover any illegal artifacts. In other words, his father wanted him to go into a person's property, openly watch them for the Aurors with no backup and hardly any necessary skills for such an undertaking; nothing short of a suicide mission.

Flashback

Harry sat within the Headmaster's office, listening to his father rant about reasons why he should spy on the Malfoys. "They are Dark. They are Death Eaters and murderers. And they deserve to go to jail. Heaven knows Malfoy only got out through bribes." Harry slumped down and sighed.

"Fine, father, I'll watch the Malfoys for you." He had barely gotten those words out, before James was whooping with joy. although he said he would spy on them, Harry wouldn't. After all, these kinds of promises were made to be broken... right?

End Flashback

"Alright, alright, Potter. I'm coming." The blond replied from his dorm. "Have you by chance seen my History Book?"

Thinking for a while, Harry responded, "Yeah, didn't you burn it by accident during Potions?"

"I did?"

"Yes. Though you better make sure Hermione doesn't find out. Otherwise..." He trailed off, shivering at the consequences. The girl was bloody vicious about these things. In the weeks prior to the vacation, Malfoy and Granger had almost brought down the walls which surrounded Hogwarts, mainly through their very loud verbal spars. They had argued about anything and everything. Harry had thought this was amusing at first...before he almost lost his ability to hear.

After that particular incident, he, joined by half the student population had brushed up on their Sound Controlling Charms.

"Yeah, yeah. The mudblood will never know." He declared.

"She'll never find out? Drake, I hate to say this but... Granger can find out anything with the help of Weasley."

"Are you on my side or not?"

"I'm on the winning side, Draco, and Granger is the winning side."

"Traitor" Draco mumbled.

Harry smirked. "I prefer the term 'diplomatic Slytherin'."

The Two of them had a special portkey preset for them to go to Malfoy Manor. You see, Lucius Malfoy, at the time, was attending a Wizengamot meeting. Narcissa Malfoy was with him. so the two were left to the capable hands of the House Elves...23 to be exact.

They appeared before a gigantic and splendorous house. A huge banner with two golden tigers on their hind feet at either side of a drawing of a flag. The flag was cyan blue in color and had a black bear on its hind paws, growling ferociously. Harry had at once recognized it.

It was the Malfoy Crest. Every old pureblood family had its own insignia to represent itself. Unlike popular belief, the Malfoy's sign was not that of a snake. This idea was commonly perceived by the past ten generations entering the Slytherin House. However, the Malfoys were originally followers of Helga Hufflepuff. This is why they resent the house so much. You see, their family doesn't like servitude too well. And boy, could they hold a grudge...especially against a dead woman who was one of Hogwarts' Founders.

"So Harry, who are you going to take to the Minister's Party?" Draco asked the raven haired boy. The party was one of the biggest topics in most pureblood households for days now. It was a center of socialization during the year. You could make friends in high places there. And if you did, it would be a good way to make your roads inwards amongst the highest in the hierarchy system.

Those who were in it were the creme of society in most circles. They were the exceedingly rich, the famous, and the politically powerful. Unfortunately, only one to two people got into such a great position every ten years.

"I will be escorting the Bones girl from Hufflepuff."

"You mean Susan?"

"You know her?" Harry asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Of course. The Bones Family is an old and respected name in my circles. Her name is no secret and she has made quite a name among the lower years of Hufflepuff" Draco stated.

"Right...and who are you taking?" Draco mumbled inaudibly. "What was that?" Harry asked, smirking.

"Parkinson, alright, I'm taking Parkinson to the ball."

"Really Drake, if you're so unhappy with your future spouse, why not complain to your parents?"

"Are you kidding, Potter. They'd tear my arguments apart!"

"Oh come on. It'll be worth a shot. I'll even help you if you like." He offered.

"Please, what could two eleven year old children such as us against to adults in an actual debate over my future marriage plans?"

"You'd be surprised. For example, the Malfoys have lasted for over a thousand years, ever since the start of Hogwarts. They have prided themselves for their blood purity and stability of the line. The Parkinsons have been here for seven hundred years with similar pride. The problem Draco is that the Malfoys and the Parkinsons, when joined, might not produce an healthy heir by Malfoy standards."

Draco's face lit up in realization and hope. "We need only present the facts, Draco, and this deal will crumble." Harry finished.

"How come I never thought of that?"

"Because you simply don't have the genius I have to ponder over topics of relativity with great intellectual depth."

"Don't push it, Potter. You might have helped me with my problem, but I'm a Malfoy, and Malfoys don't let people walk over them unless it benefits themselves."

"True, but you need my help."

Draco growled. "So, how are we going to confront them?" The two spent the rest of the day planning on the confrontation that would soon take place.

By some unexpected coincidence, Snape, was actually invited to dinner that night. It would be interesting to see what his reaction to the arranged marriage was.

"Mother, Father, Harry and I have been talking and I think that it is best to reconsider the Parkinsons as eligible people to marry." That was it, the plan was in motion.

"Why ever the thought, Draco?" Lucius asked.

"Well, Mr. Malfoy, as you know there have always been three standing requirements in a Malfoy's spouse. One is the assured continuation of the Malfoy Line. The Parkinsons have usually had two children, statistically speaking of course, and the Malfoy's have had one heir. Would it be prudent to join to lines having such low rates of child birth in marriage to produce an heir. for such a noble line?" Harry asked. Snape's expression at the thought of Draco's arranged marriage was one of disgust. He seemed to approve of the well thought argument. Lucius and Narcissa looked thoughtful.

"Perhaps you are right. But should we, hypothetically speaking, cancel the contract with the Parkinsons, who would we make an agreement with?"

"Well, Father, the Moon Family are fairly rich and they do have a daughter a year younger than me. They have been well known Ravenclaws for generations. Surely they would be a better match. They have around three to four children per generation." Draco said. The three adults nodded.

"Yes they would be better, and their pureblood too. Severus what do you think about this."

"Lucius, old friend, I have always respected your decisions, but I absolutely detest the contract with the Parkinsons. They seek only to have more power within the system. The Moon Family is a good, traditional one, however. I personally know the Head. Maybe these children are right. It wouldn't do for the Malfoy Line to end so soon." The Potions Master replied.

"Very well then, I shall void the contract tomorrow and draw up a new one." The Malfoy Patriarch said, satisfied. Draco sighed in relief. The plan had worked. "But such acts of help have to be rewarded, am I right, Narcissa?"

"Quite right, Darling." The wife answered.

"Then, Harold James Potter, of the House of Potter, third Heir of the Line of Potter, and Apprentice of Hogwarts, I, Lucius Malfoy, Patriarch of the House of Malfoy, do hereby grant thee the Right of Allegiance and Aid from my family and generations after for your help in the assurance of the continuation of my line." To say that Harry was shocked after hearing a declaration of Allegiance was an understatement. Such an act required trust. Lots of it. And you needed to prove your worth before it could be invoked.

"I thank you for giving me this glorious Right. I hope that I will show you my worthiness in time, Lord Malfoy." Harry answered in accordance to the pureblood laws and rules. Lucius smiled. It seemed the Prodigy was well versed in proper customs after all.

"You ready Harry?" Draco asked nervously at the calm boy. He was always so composed. Draco never really knew how he did it. It was a miracle in itself. Nobody he knew could do it except Harry. Well, no child anyway.

He was quite happy that he was now beside Serena Moon. apparently, Harry had convinced her not to get a date just yet. That boy was good at foreseeing these things. Yet another mystery of the Prodigy. Draco sighed. Scanning the crowd, he saw a red haired boy

in some silk dress robes. The quality was good. And that was the problem. The boy was undeniably a Weasley.

The Weasley's couldn't afford such a robe. So where did it come from? Draco mused upon the thought. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Harry talking to the Weasley. He heard the name Percival. So this was Percy Weasley. He was a Gryffindor, Seventh Year. Head boy too. Good Grades, plans to be a Ministry Official. Coming here increases his chances at success. But how did he get in with those robes. Unless...unless Harry gave it to him.

Draco grinned. Harry, you sneaky, little Slytherin. Fudge will never expect such a 'loyal' employee to be spying on him. For a child nonetheless. I should convince Father to vouch for him. It would be useful for Harry's little mole. He spent the next few minutes observing Percy and how he interacted with the other people. His performance was exemplary. Yes, I should definitely persuade Father to help him. Draco thought, nodding.

Harry had spent a good fifteen minutes talking to several different people. They weren't just any people, however. At least three of them were part of the Ruling Circle. They hadn't talked to him merely for the sake of Lucius. That and they were curious about him. I mean who wouldn't be? He was a Prodigy, the First Hogwarts Apprentice in over fifty years. He was also a Potter and a Slytherin...sort of. He was already famed for two medals in Potions as well. Plus, he helped defend the school from an attack.

All these combined made him one of the biggest talked about mysteries in the Ruling Circle. Mainly because many thought he should be recruited. The fact that Malfoy Senior thought he was a 'bright' boy helped his reputation. His brother was already a nominee for the Junior Position in the Circle. Many had wanted to befriend the Potter brothers. Together, they were dangerous...maybe even more than the entire circle given time.

They were still in school and many thought that one of them would become Chief Warlock and Supreme Mugwump while the other would become the Minister of Magic. If that ever happened...the

Potters would be in virtual control of the entire country. What made them even more dangerous was the fame of their sister to help them boost their standing. The three would have to be watched. The eldest more so than his siblings.

Alexei Potter was considered the most critical. He was the eldest and the first one to show outstanding talent. It was probable that his influence helped shape Harry. Alex was already promised a seat in the Wizengamot and his superb skills in Transfiguration, Potions, and Charms were surprising. It rivaled that of many Post Hogwarts Graduates. His power was thought to be able to rival Dumbledore's once he hit majority.

Normally, another Dumbledore wouldn't have threatened their survival. But Alex was different. He was sneaky and cunning...more so than Dumbledore. He was ruthless too. This combined with his sister's fame, the Potter wealth, and his brothers power, prowess, skill, knowledge, and loyalty, would make him one of the most dangerous people in politics. This was a key reason why they, the Ruling Circle, wanted to recruit him into their order. Less they have to fight for their very survival in the world.

Next was Harold Potter. the youngest of them all. He was an Apprentice but his Slytherin sense was strong but near invisible to the public. That made him a threat, a major one. With his brother and sister by his side, he would grow up polishing his skills and powers, numerous as they are. Their spies had seen his elemental magic personally. If he could successfully harness the power...He would be known worldwide. He was the one most likely to gain international standing as well as the position of Supreme Mugwump and Chief Warlock. His power was sure to exceed that of Dumbledore's.

The last was Katherine Potter. Her power, magically speaking, paled in comparison to that of her brothers but was by no circumstances weak. Her magic was slightly below that of a Death Bringer. What made her even a hazard to them was her fame. That combined with the Slytherin cunning of her brothers was a lethal combination. She would help them greatly and though unnecessary. She was still able to gather sympathy of nearly three-fourths of the country. That alone would make sure she was a big threat too.

The Potter Trio were perhaps the most perilous mix of people they had ever encountered. What was more, their loyalty to each other was strengthened because of their bond as a family. They could only pray to God that they weren't totally demolished in a political strife against them when they had grown up.

However, if they were lured into the Ruling Circle's Order, it would prove to be beneficial. That was why they were trying to recruit them so early in their years. They wanted to guide them and eventually allow them to lead the Circle. They would help the three. Yes, and they would give their support as well. And anyone with half a brain knew that their support was practically that of the Ministry's.

Harry was currently sitting sitting at his table with Draco and his date. Susan was off with her Aunt. Suddenly someone from behind him said, "Ah, so you must be Harry Potter." The three of them turned around only to face the greatly revered Nicholas Flamel. "I've heard a lot about you young man. A Potions Award at the age of eleven. You must be proud."

"Yes sir, I am." Harry answered respectfully.

"Now Harry, May I talk to you in private?"

"Of course, sir." He followed the man into the Garden outside. Nicholas placed a few secrecy charms between them making Harry wide-eyed. If it required the complexity of these charms it must be something important.

"Harry, you are an apprentice of Hogwarts much like I was back in the days. Unfortunately, I have been unable to pass on the Apprentice Legacy. Mostly because no one was left to pass it on to. However, when you came along, I made it my goal to give it to you. Do you know what powers you have as an apprentice?"

"I am immune to punishments given by prefects and the Head Students?" Harry half said, half asked.

The Alchemist sighed. "Albus didn't tell you much did he? Well, not a surprise I suppose. As an Apprentice, you are supposed to reside in the Apprentice Dormitory. Also, I believe you should check the girl's bathroom in the second floor."

"The deserted one? The one haunted by the Ghost, Moaning Myrtle?"

"Yes, that one. You'll find it to be very useful what's hidden there. normally, I'd tell you, but I was bound by magic not to. Also, take the Magical Talent Test earlier. If you can, take it before you go back to school. I've already arranged it for you to go on an anytime basis. Its the only way you'll find out what I'm talking about. After all, a certain power is needed to enter the chamber."

"Chamber? What chamber?"

"Nothing, nothing." Nicholas said jovially. He had sincerely hoped that the boy found out what he was talking about soon. The clues he left would be adequate hints to lead him in the right direction. He just hoped the boy did as he said. "And Harry, keep this to yourself. Tell no one. And you might want to brush up on your Occlumency." With that, the Master Alchemist strode away, leaving a befuddled Harry in his wake.

Please Review.

Chapter Nine: The Test, The Phoenix and the Ball

Harry returned to the party, quite confused at the implication of a 'secret chamber'. Or at least, that's what Nicholas Flamel said. He very much doubted the existence of such a chamber. And even if there was such a place, why would it be hidden in the girl's bathroom? He was so deep in thought that he hadn't noticed his brother coming.

Harry was startled when Alex, who was behind him, spoke up. "So Harry, what did Nicholas want to talk to you about?"

"How do you know about that?"

Alex rolled his eyes. "Please Harry; we are amongst gossip mongers of the highest breed. Never underestimate their power of spreading news like wildfire. Now tell me, what did the Alchemist want?"

"He was telling me about a secret chamber in the second floor bathroom, the one where Myrtle resides in. He says it will help me but I should probably take a Magical Talent Test first." He replied without hesitation. He had complete and total trust in his brother to keep a secret. He was his role model after all. He looked up to him as how a child would look up to his father.

Alex's face had a confused expression on it. "A chamber? A test? This might be useful. We should investigate it further. We'll go to Gringots tomorrow and take the test immediately." Harry nodded in agreement. "For the meantime Harry, tell no one about this. Not your friends, not anyone."

"I'll be going now, Alex. I think I'll go find Neville. He's a nice chap, a bloody genius at Herbology as well." Harry said, walking away. He found Neville, seated with Hannah Abbott. The two of them were laughing and talking cheerily. They seemed to be getting on well.

Taking a seat beside Neville, who was slightly surprised at his sudden appearance, Harry asked, "So Neville, how's your vacation been lately?"

"It's been pretty good Harry. Thanks for the book on rare plants and habitats by the way. It's a great book."

"It was nothing. But may I ask why you thought it would be a good idea to send me the branch of a Brazilian Renascido? I mean how is that supposed to be useful?" Harry asked, questioning the weird gift.

"You'll see, Harry. And when you do, you can thank me later." He and Hannah shared a knowing smile.

"Well then, since you two are having such a lovely time with each other, I suppose I'll go find Katy. At least she's not love struck." The couple reddened into a shade that would have made any Weasley proud. Harry had left before they could exact any kind of revenge upon his one body.

He found Katy with her usual friends at a table which was almost half way across the room. "Hello, Harry. Why are you here? Don't you usually hang out with Neville or Drake?"

"Yeah, but Draco is off dancing with Selena Moon, his new future wife. And Neville is with Hannah, probably talking or something of the same manner."

"Selena Moon? The youngest of the Moon Family? I thought he was to marry the pudgy girl from Slytherin, her name was Pansy I believe."

"Yeah, but over the holidays we managed to convince his parents to cancel the wedding. A new contract was drawn up with the Moon Family and they accepted, well the girl accepted. Her family was very silent about it."

"Well, they probably want her to make her own decisions, but seriously though, Harry, Selena and Drake would make such a lovely couple. And who did you come here with? I don't see your date around."

Harry shrugged. "I came with Susan Bones. We have an understanding, you see. Officially, she is my guest for this evening's

celebrations. Unofficially, we decided it would be best if we could dance with whoever we wanted. Who did you come with?"

"I originally came with a fellow named McCormick. But I ditched him. He's a stalker, I swear. Ron's here because he's a pureblood, and Hermione came as his date. They've been arguing over house elves for the past," she looked at her wrist watch, "hour and a half."

"Really? They must have set a new record. Drake's never argued with her any longer than fifteen minutes."

"I know."

"Hmm, well I guess the noble thing for me to do would be to stop this petty bickering."

Katy snorted. "I'd like to see you try. The tension between them can't be stopped, Harry. No one's ever done it. Trust me, I know. In fact, I'll give twenty galleons to the person who can stop them."

"Well, dearest sister, I do have a knack for doing the impossible. Get ready to be Twenty Galleons lighter by the end of the night." He turned to face the arguing teens.

"Granger, Weasley, what are you two quarreling about now?"

"Ronald, here thinks that house elves should have no rights at all!" The bushy haired girl practically shouted.

"Well then, let's talk about this. First off, Hermione, what do you know about House Elves?"

"Their poor creatures who were enslaved by wizards and witches to serve them. I think they should be free, personally."

"And there lies the problem."

"What do you mean?"

"You claim you want them to be free, liberated, correct?" The girl nodded fervently. "But do you even understand them? Their Magic? Their way of life? Their thinking? How they would react?" The proclaimed know-it-all slowly shook her head, stunned by the unexpected question.

"See, you can't claim to really want 'the best' for them if you don't truly understand them. To you Hermione, what is more important freedom in death or happiness in life?"

"Happiness in life, but I don't see how that is relevant-"

"IT IS COMPLETELY RELEVANT!" Harry shouted. Hermione was silenced by the outburst. "House Elves are happy in servitude so long as they aren't abused. They are perfectly happy. And what's more, should they live in freedom for too long, they die. And not in some glorious peaceful way that your simple, innocent mind must have visualized. They will die with shame...as outcasts among their kin.

They will be considered as traitors by their own family. And their magic will slowly kill them in pain...much worse than that of a Cruciatus Curse. Tell me Hermione; is freedom worth giving up a life of happiness?"

"Well...no."

"Ah, so we are in agreement, the house elves should be protected from abuse but not freed because their happy." Turning to Katy, he asked, "I believe you offered twenty galleons to anyone who could stop their bickering. It seems I have properly silenced them over their intended argument so I believe I am completely eligible for the prize." Katy handed to him twenty golden coins, clearly amused.

"So where are your other friends?" Katy asked.

"Daphne and Theodore are off God knows where. And Blaise...well I haven't really seen him yet."

Just then, Draco decided to show up. "Harry, where's Susan?"

"Don't know, don't care."

At this point, Draco started to visibly panic. "Well, you have to get someone for the dance!"

"What dance?"

"The Dance of the children who are now studying at Hogwarts."

Harry stared at him. "You Purebloods have way too many parties. Don't worry, Drake, I can get a partner for the dance in no time."

"Oh yeah? Show me then."

"Sure." Harry scanned the nearby tables to find a girl to dance with. He spotted a petite, red haired one who looked to be about ten years old or so. He walked over to her and tapped her shoulder lightly. She was mildly surprised when she saw him. "Hello, I'm Harry Potter, and you are?"

"I-I'm G-Ginny Weasley." She stammered.

Harry smiled at her warmly. Ah, the effects of the trademark Potter Smile. It made most girls melt and few had a resistance against it.

"So, Ginny, would you like to dance?"

"Um...okay" She replied, dubiously. There was a reason why he was already one of the most attractive First Year boys at Hogwarts. He had inherited his Fathers looks and unruly hair.

He turned to look at Draco, who was dumbfounded at how easily he had done that, with a smug look on his face. Suddenly, a loud sonorous induced voice filled the room. "All First Year Hogwarts Attendees and escorts, please proceed to the Entrance Chamber. Thank You for your cooperation." The children were quickly...herded into said chamber. Curse those Purebloods and their innumerable formalities.

And so it began with some herald announcing their names and said escorts. It was full ten minutes before it got close to Potter. "Presenting: Orlando Delphi and his escort Katherine Potter," Said children walked through the elegant, marble doors hand in hand.

Harry sighed. He was next on the list. "Presenting: Harold Potter and his escort Ginerva Weasley," He took Ginny's hand in his, which nearly made her faint, and led them through the grand doors. Flashes of light, most likely from the photographers there, met them.

It took a full three minutes for them all to be assembled, names properly promulgated to the guests and all. The voice of the announcer filled the room once again. "Let the Dance Begin." Music started playing.

It turned out that they had to do the Waltz. Harry had no problem with that. It was one of the first dances he learned as a child. He could execute it perfectly and with grace. This came as a shock to the many, many, guests there. More pictures were snapped of him and his red haired companion.

To him, dancing always seemed like walking with a few patterns added in. But, alas, not all of the children there could dance with his skill. Ronald Weasley and Robert Slivenson were past of that humiliated group. Particularly because they never bothered or had the patience to learn the art even in its simplest forms.

The music stopped and many of the couples left the floor. Harry was one of them. Before he left though, he kissed the hand of Ginny, making some girls glare at her. The girl blushed like a tomato.

Harry joined Draco at their table, smirking victoriously. "I told you so."

"I will never know the secret of the Potters and how they do that." Draco said shaking his head.

"Two words, Drake, Potter Charm."

December 31, 2000, Diagon Alley, Gringots

Harry and Alex stood within the polished floors of Gringots. Today, Alex was officially fifteen. It meant that the emancipation procedure, as stated in the First Heir Clause of the Majority Act, would go unchallenged.

Also, it meant that temporary guardianship of Harry could be placed upon Alex. Another great thing to note about the day. They were still, officially under the Potter Head's Authority, but being emancipated gave them the right to establish businesses, have personal vaults, invest, handle their own finances, and generally have most rights adults had.

One of the largest restrictions, however was that they could only acquire the nearest inheritance, by blood, if there was more than one and was not under the power of someone who is more eligible to take the inheritance.

"Please drop three drops of blood onto your respective vials to start the Inheritance and Magical Talent Revealer Test." Harry did so. A goblin snatched it and started adding all sorts of liquids into it, before re-corking the vial and shaking it hard. It turned into a silver color. The Goblin poured the unknown liquid onto a piece of parchment. Writings started to appear.

Harold James Potter

Son of James Edward Potter and Lily Marie Potter nee Evans

Third Heir of the Potter Line

Inheritable Lines to the Tenth Degree:

First Heir of Peverell

First Heir of Raveus

First Heir of Amadeus

Third Heir of Potter

Fifth Heir of Morrigan

Sixth Heir of Mortin

Eighth Heir of Isin

Tenth Heir of Ordos

Lines Immediately Inheritable by Law:

Peverell

Peverell Possessions:

Heirlooms-Invisibility Cloaks, Ancient Battle Magic Manuscripts

Estates:

Peverell Mansion-Northern Scotland, Midas Villa (Condition, need of drastic repairs, Recommended for total reconstruction)

3 Adjacent Lots in Diagon Alley (Empty)

Monetary:

20,000,000 Galleons (Liquid)

30,000,000 (Estate)

Investments: NA

Inherited Abilities:

Peverell- Affinity for Defensive Magic

Special Abilities of Harold James Potter:

Parseltongue

Elemental of Water, Wind, and Lightning (Classified as Storm Elemental)

Tamer's Touch

Possible Abilities:

Parselmagic

Ancient Magic

Warder

Ward Breaker

Aura Manipulation

Magi Sense

Animagus

Apparation

Occlumens

Legillimens

Power Control

Core Manipulation

Elemental Riding

Rune Master

Developments:

Non-Verbal Spell Casting

Basic Wandless Magic

Gobbledook or Goblin Tongue

Affinities:

Gray Magic

Dark Magic

Light Magic

Heavy Magic

Potions

Transfiguration

Spell Crafting

Please Note: More Powers might be accessible upon majority.
Advised to take the test then.

Scaling System:

Muggles- 0 to 1 Abilities, 0 Possibilities

Squibs- 2 to 3 Abilities, 0 Possibilities

Weak Wizards- 2 to 3 Abilities, 1 to 3 Possibilities

Ordinary Wizards- 2 to 3 Abilities, 4 to 5 Possibilities,

Above Average Wizards- 4 to 6 Abilities, 6 to 8 Possibilities

Inner Circle Wizards- 7 to 8 Abilities, 9 to 12 Possibilities

Mages- 9 to 10 Abilities, 3 Developments

Power Mages- 11+ Abilities, 7+ Developments

It was kind of sad how very few people in the wizarding world knew about how strong they really were. Only five in every thirty-thousand bothered taking the test. Most purebloods thought it was a waste of time. Muggleborns weren't informed of its existence. Most Half-bloods didn't have enough money to waste on something they considered as frivolous as this.

The greatest Dark Lords of all times knew this...and they took advantage of them. It made them better than most people and their followers would admire them thinking that they used various dark rituals. Lies! Anyone who bothered studying ritualistic magic would know that excessive ritual usage will cause loss of magic. There was only so much magic a body could take before it suffered heart failure.

Some of the greatest wizards and witches of all times were famous because they trained themselves to unlock their full potential. These were the ones who fought against the dark lords. Dumbledore was one of them. Merlin was another. No one was truly that powerful. Just talented in fields only others could dream of.

Harry returned to Malfoy Manor. He was greeted by a frantic Draco. "Harry, the branch you got from Longbottom is glowing blue and silver." He said rapidly.

"What did you do to it?"

"Nothing, I didn't touch it, I swear."

"When did the glowing start?"

"About five minutes ago." Harry sighed as he made his way to his room. The branch was resting upon the wall and behold it was, in fact, glowing. Although it was now a radiant gold in shine. Taking his wand out, Harry jabbed it at the branch, uncertainly. He wasn't exactly prepared for this kind of situation. Whatever the situation was.

The branch started to shake violently. Harry took an involuntary step backwards. The piece of wood exploded into pieces. When the smoke cleared, there was nothing but ash left of the branch. Well

that's what it seemed anyway until a small bird thing emerged from the remains of the branch.

It was white and silver in color. It had yellow, piercing eyes that seemed so familiar to Harry. "Hedwig, is that you."

The secret of Phoenixes existence can be traced back to birds which have died for their masters in faithfulness and dedication. The master must also get over the bird's death. It is still largely unknown how the selection process goes though. Or even where they come from or how they find their masters.

-excerpt from: Mystical Creatures by Neville Longbottom, Chapter VII: Phoenixes, worldwide standard book on the habitats of creatures

For those of you who might have questions about this chapter, please, please, look at my Author's Notes at the top of the chapter to answer those questions.

Please Review

Chapter Ten: Return to Hogwarts and Duels

The branch started to shake violently. Harry took an involuntary step backwards. The piece of wood exploded into pieces. When the smoke cleared, there was nothing but ash left of the branch. Well that's what it seemed anyway until a small bird thing emerged from the remains of the branch.

It was white and silver in color. It had yellow, piercing eyes that seemed so familiar to Harry. "Hedwig? Is that you?"

The phoenix trilled in affirmation to the question. Just then, Draco decided what a wonderful idea it would be to enter the room. "Harry, you have a phoenix?"

"I think...I think its Hedwig."

Draco looked at him as if he were crazy. "Harry, Hedwig's dead. I know it's hard for you but..."

"Drake, she came out of the branch. And she also has a resemblance to Hedwig. Aren't Phoenixes reborn from their former selves at either New Year's Eve or Easter?"

"Yeah..." Draco said in realization. Harry was still staring at the phoenix. Thump! Harry turned around to see Draco's unconscious form on the floor. Perhaps he wasn't quite ready for that yet. Shrugging unconcernedly, Harry turned back to face his new animal companion. He spent the next hour or so trying to find out about phoenixes more. He'd need too...especially if he was going to have one as a pet.

It turned out that the Malfoy's had a good amount of books on magical creatures. Of course, most of the information he got on phoenixes there were useless. For example: Did you know phoenixes were rare? Most useless fact ever. Everyone already knew that. Heck, even muggles did.

But none could match the stupidest fact he had read up on in the span of an hour. A phoenix has color. Why the bloody hell did they

even write that down. Of course Phoenixes had color. The only things that didn't were water, maybe glass and a whole group of transparent objects.

He had learned some interesting things though. Phoenixes, apparently, were so magical that they fed off magic by absorbing it. Their close ties to magic also allowed them to move through space at high speeds or simply flashing there. This allowed them to manipulate the things around them as well.

At least he never had to worry about feeding his new pet. He returned to his room in time to see Drake waking up. The formerly unconscious boy took one look at the phoenix before blacking out again. Harry sighed.

Having a phoenix is going to take some getting used to. He thought. Looking at Draco's body, he silently added, A lot of getting used to.

Harry stood within the not so amazing magically powered, steel locomotive known as the Hogwarts Express. One of the things he noted about it was it was painted in red and gold. If he had to take a guess, Dumbledore was an avid Gryffindor. As he was walking through the carpeted floor of the train, he heard whisperings and mutterings going around. Probably the Rumor Mill acting up again.

Deciding to find out what people were talking about now a days, he listened closely. "...Slivenson claimed Potter had used some sort of dark spell over the Weasley girl at the Minister's Ball. He swore he saw a glazed look over her eyes. I heard that's a sign of possession or Imperius affection you know. What if Potter did a cast the Imperius? That would make him a dark wizard. And he must be a good one to if the Aurors didn't notice!"

Harry snorted upon hearing this. So Slivenson was trying to discredit him again? Bah! Let them talk. Their opinions about him mattered little. It would last for a month at most. None of them would dare make a move against him except Robert. And in the event that his lackeys and he decided they could handle him...well, let's just say that Harry would take great pleasure in taking care of them. The older students wouldn't believe this story. They weren't dumb enough too.

That made him safe. Well, safer anyway.

His friends such as Neville, Drake, and the rest wouldn't desert him. None of the Slytherins would either less they faced the wrath of the Malfoy Scion. The Ravenclaws, most of them anyway, were too smart to fall for a simple rumor. They based their knowledge on facts and not opinions. Besides, Alex would take care of his friends. So far, it was Katy, Neville, and their Gryffindor buddies that were in the most trouble.

Gryffindor House was, for all intents and purposes, Slivenson's main base of supporters. Katy might be less of a target, but Neville had no such protection. He might need to start training in Battle Magic.

Hogwarts, Great Hall, Nine Hours Later, after Dinner

"Students, welcome back to Hogwarts, our beloved school. I hope you all enjoyed your vacation. Now, our caretaker, Argus Filch has told me to remind you that any and all prank materials that can be bought in Zonko's Joke Shop is strictly prohibited." Dumbledore said, his eyes twinkling at full blast, to the newly seated students.

Harry rolled his eyes. It was typical for Filch to try and get the things banned. Of course, he was just making it more popular and appealing to some people. Dumbledore was amused by it as well if the twinkling of his eyes was and clue about it.

Harry stood up and made his way towards the Head Table. He was quite aware that everyone's eyes were on him. This was just what he was hoping for. Dumbledore would be destroyed if he refused him now.

"Headmaster," Harry greeted, "I have recently been informed by Grand Alchemist Nicholas Flamel that the dorm I am currently residing in is different from the one I'm supposed to reside in."

The aged man frowned. "I'm not sure what your talking about, Harry."

Harry smirked. "I'm sure you don't Headmaster, but according to a former apprentice, Hogwarts: A History, and Section 3, Article 5, Law 7, Paragraph 1 stating that 'all Apprentice Classed Students of Hogwarts are to live in the Hogwarts Apprentice Dorms while they are still students of Hogwarts and are currently studying there'." Harry was no fool. He wasn't about to take the word of a man, no matter how revered they are, by itself.

"Correct me if I'm wrong Headmaster, but it says there specifically that I have to live in a place called the Apprentice Dorms not the Slytherin Dorms. I might take this up with the Board of Governors." Harry said.

"I doubt that will be necessary, my boy. Severus, please escort Mr. Potter to his new residence." The Potions Master nodded curtly, getting up and leading Harry to his new dorm.

The two of them were somewhere in the fourth floor east corridor in front of a painting of a knight. Snape waved his wand at it and the door opened automatically. "Harry, you better stop baiting Dumbledore like that. He's more dangerous than you think."

"Don't worry about it Professor, I know the man has limits."

"The real question to be asked is do you know his limits? You can keep pushing him until he cracks. And then...well I'd rather not get into that. The password right now is 'Goblin Steel'. To change the password, tell the portrait what the new password you want to be. You need to say the old password as well to activate this feature. Good night." Snape strode away with his cloak billowing behind him.

Harry was speechless. He had never really considered that Dumbledore had a limit. He always seemed to play the entire 'holier than thou act' on people. He was merciful and patient, hard to anger. But he was human. And a human had their limits, right?

Perhaps he should be more careful in provoking Dumbledore. Harry mused on the thought. He looked at the painting in front of him before changing the password to Sodium. Nobody would ever guess his password to be a muggle one.

The dormitory, if you could call it that was...nice. It was more of a suite really. There was a secret one way passage to the library, a view overlooking the lake, a king sized bed, a bathroom complete with shower and Jacuzzi, several bookshelves, and a large wardrobe. The Hogwarts Crest was engraved at the base of the bed. it was better than the other dorms that was for sure.

Harry regularly sat at the Slytherin Table with Drake and Neville. It only increased over time because of the harassment they faced at the other tables. The more violent people started this. It seemed their desire for punishment was greater than that of their fear. Harry had underestimated them. And that was a dangerous move.

Slivenson had taken advantage of this. He had openly ridiculed Harry at any given opportunity. He mocked, taunted, and belittled him to no end and Harry was quickly being aggravated. This led to a particular event happening in the Great Hall to which none of the faculty bothered to stop.

“Slivenson, I challenge you to a Duel of Honor. You have gone too far with your insults this time. In the name of my family, I invoke the right of vengeance.”

Dumbledore was rapidly paling as he heard this. The Duel couldn't be stopped by anyone unless the offender offered a full apology which was accepted. If it was not satisfactory to the offended, they would still have to fight.

Slivenson had no such notions of fright however. In fact, he looked positively delighted upon hearing the challenge. “I accept, Potter.”

A platform was conjured for them to duel on, courtesy of McGonagall. Both of them stepped on the platform. The moment the fight began, Harry found himself under the constant fire of stunners. Slivenson seemed to want to end it fast. This was not good. Harry was barely a third year in battle magic and an assortment of advanced offensive spells and curses. He was astounded that Slivenson was this good in fighting already.

Narrowly missing an oncoming stunner he sent a punching jinx at Slivenson's stomach, knocking the wind out of him. Another punch brought the boy to his knees. "Talea" The spell caused a moderately large gash to appear on his opponent's knee.

Tightening his hold, Harry cast a bone-breaking curse. A sickly yellow color slammed into Slivenson's right arm, snapping the bones in two with a loud cracking sound. Slivenson had dropped his wand, unable to hold it anymore. Harry swiftly waved his wand at the injured boy, sending said boy sprawling to the ground.

Pocketing his wand, he turned to face the shocked crowd of students. "Let that be a lesson to those of you who wish to cross me." He proclaimed ominously. Needless to say, no one dared bother him for a few days after the event transpired.

Dumbledore rushed the wounded boy to the Hospital Wing to get patched up and mended. His face was ghostly pale. The boy is deeper into the dark arts than I thought. I have to make sure this doesn't happen again. He's becoming too strong for his classmates. I have to save him from the dark.

Please Review.

Chapter Eleven: The Quest for the Chamber

How dare he! Slivenson silently fumed. How dare Potter attack me. I am Robert Slivenson, the boy-who-lived! He should be expelled for this! A slow menacing smile crept up his face. I'll tell dad about this. He'll know what to do. And with the amount of people who saw what happened, he'll be faced with expulsion from the board. Robert smiled maliciously at the thought.

Smiling evilly, he saw Harry enter the Hall. Revenge will be mine, Potter!

Harry entered the Great Hall somewhat relieved by the lack of glares being sent to his way. Instead, fearful looks passed through the ranks of most students in the lower years. It wasn't a big improvement, but it was an improvement nonetheless.

Sitting down beside Draco, he noted the lack of hesitation and fright amongst the Slytherins. Harry smiled appreciatively. If there was one thing he learned from this event, it was that his friends were loyal to him. They wouldn't be swept away by public opinion or general belief. That was good at least.

A note fell on his empty plate with writing on it. Picking it up tentatively, he read it.

Harry,

Meet me in the Owlery in thirty minutes. Bring the Map and Hedwig with you. We hunt for the chamber today.

Alex

He looked up to see the retreating figure of his brother going through the massive wooden doors of the Great Hall. Harry hastily piled up a light breakfast on his plate and ate it hurriedly before rushing out and going up to his dorm.

Inside his dorm, he quickly changed into his Dragon Hide Armor. A quick flick of his wand made a piece of parchment fly into his hand. Pocketing it, he ran all the way to the Owlery Tower.

He was panting lightly when he reached there considering that he had to run half across the school to get here. Alex was waiting for him there.

“Well? Where’s Hedwig? She’ll be our transportation for today.” Alex asked expectantly.

Hedwig, come here please. He thought. A flash of light filled the room temporarily blinding both of them. Once they had restored their ability of sight again, they saw a magnificent blue and silver feathered phoenix perched on a nearby cage.

“Hedwig, can you take us to the Girls Bathroom on the Second Floor Corridor?” Alex asked. The phoenix let out a trill before clutching their shoulders with a talon each. The feeling of their bodies being tugged away by a magical bird was unfamiliar to them. It was quite painful as well with inertia being taken into account. The sudden movement through space was painful during the first few times. The farther you went using one of these methods, the more painful it became. This is probably why most children are only allowed to use these forms of transportation to a maximum radius of thirty miles.

THUD! Harry and Alex were nonchalantly dropped eight feet from the air by the phoenix adding more pain to their already aching bodies. The armor didn’t help ease the landing at all. Harry sent a dark glare at the bird, who merely flew out the window, completely ignoring them.

“Bloody Chicken” Harry mumbled under his breath. It was a good thing that Hedwig wasn’t there to hear it. Phoenixes could be rather vicious when they wanted to. He was lying face down on the floor. Alex didn’t seem bothered or even affected by the pain seeing as he barely reacted to its presence. Key words being ‘seem’ and ‘barely’ meaning to the untrained eye it would appear like that.

But after years of training with him, Harry had come know his brother better than anyone else. The slightest sign he showed would be

enough for Harry to tell what his current state was. He had been particularly fond of a muggle series featuring a detective named Sherlock Holmes.

Harry turned his body around to see a tiny, curled up, bronze serpent. Around it was a mighty red Griffin on its hind feet. A Blue Raven was perched on the Griffin's Head, its wings open. Its mouth was open and seemed to have a small blue floating orb coming out of it. Finally, a Badger stood beside the Serpent with metal claws and armored hide.

It was...odd symbol to say the least. It was, Harry knew, the symbol of the Founders. However, such things were rare these days and never had one been made like this. The animals looked as if they were defending something. Well...if Flamel had deemed it as 'helpful', it probably would be worth protecting.

"Alex, I found something." Harry said. Alex came rushing beside him to see what he had found. To say that he was also puzzled would be an understatement. The two of them had never heard about this before.

"Well, I suppose this would be the entrance. The problem is how do we open or reveal this entrance?"

"We could blast it open." Harry suggested.

"Okay, let me rephrase my question. How do we open it without leaving blatant evidence of our entry and or creating suspicion from Dumbledore?" He paused for a while, thinking. "Also making sure that the method we use to open it is inconspicuous." He added as an afterthought.

"It might be warded and rune defended so I think we need to unravel those defenses first." Harry said. "It might be that if we can successfully destroy its defensive mechanisms, it will open up automatically."

"We don't have the expertise to fulfill such highly complicated magic. To do so would be dangerous, reckless, and possibly fatal." Harry was about to reply when a memory came flooding into his mind.

Flashback- Four Months Ago, Annual Sorting

Harry took the hat off his head. "And Mr. Potter, come and see me in the Headmaster's office some time. It's dreadfully boring up there. Just tell the gargoyle and they'll let you in."

End Flashback

"That's it!" Harry shouted. Of course, Alex was confused as to why his brother just yelled. He hadn't actually remembered the sorting ceremony as it was completely useless for him to do so. Harry, on the other hand, nearly forgot about it but nonetheless remembered the event. For him, it was the beginning of his time to shine.

"What do you mean 'that's it'." Alex asked.

"The Sorting Hat." Harry said triumphantly.

"The Sorting Hat Harry, as far as I can tell there are three problems with having the hat help us. First and foremost, can it even help us. Second of all, why do you say it will help us. And last but not least, what's to say we can sneak into the Headmaster's Office to talk to this hat and not get caught."

"Well, we can see if Dumbledore's there by using the map. The hat was made by the founders and is the longest surviving sentient relic there is. If it doesn't know what to do then who will. And lastly, the hat said in my sorting that I could go talk to it anytime. So there." Harry smirked victoriously once again.

Alex sighed, seeing that there was no way to stop his brother. Plus, his argument was pretty valid in itself. "Fine, we'll go and see the hat." Harry took out the map from his pocket and activated it. "Map, locate Dumbledore."

The outline of Hogwarts was replaced by neat scribbling which said "Not within Hogwarts."

Harry smiled as he read the words. Silently, he handed the map to Alex to read the results of the search. Alex's face remained completely passive as he read it though. The two of them headed off to Dumbledore's Office. The Gargoyle Guard let them in, as expected. They found the ragged, old hat on top of a desk, seemingly sleeping...or at least as close to a sleeping state as a magically enchanted hat could attain.

"So, Harry Potter, you've decided to come and see me at last. I say, I am quite honored that you have decided to grace me with your presence." The hat said sarcastically, startling the two boys.

"Hello Aethan. My brother and I have a little problem."

"Hmm...Very well what is it?"

"We found a strange emblem in the bathroom haunted by Moaning Myrtle. It was the crest of all four founders in a defensive stance. We think it may be the way to find the secret entrance into a secret chamber Nicholas Flamel told us to look for."

"Ah, yes I remember that particular chamber and the day I told young Flamel to find it. It seems he has upheld his promise to pass down the knowledge of its existence."

"Can you at least tell us what the chamber is and how to break the enchantments protecting it?" Alex asked.

"I suppose I could." Both of them perked up at this. "I will grant you access to the Locus of Eruditio or Place of Learning in English. It is, to put it simply, a place containing several books which contains the Founder's Research, Experiments, Ways to hone skills and Abilities, etc.

There are four ways to enter it. The one you have found was chosen by Slytherin. It is known as the way to enter the Chamber of Secrets. Each point of entry is guarded by the same set of runes.

After you get past the initial defenses, there is a creature which stands guard, though it varies from each access point you use. For Slytherin's it is a Basilisk, Gryffindor used a Griffin, Ravenclaw chose a Thunder Beak Raven, and Hufflepuff used the Blade Badger. Each is equally dangerous.

I suggest you don't try to confront them. Once you enter the main hall, which is the single convergence point of the four entry ways, you can head into the library immediately. I advise you to secure all four entry points. Only the Slytherin Passage has been cleared safely. The rest have never been used, primarily due to lack of need.

Make sure that you tell no one of this chamber. Now each passage way requires a password before it opens up again. For Slytherin, you need to say 'Open Up' in Parseltongue. For Ravenclaw, it is 'Reincarnation of Knowledge '. For Hufflepuff, the password is 'Accepting and United'. For Gryffindor, it is 'Fury of the Blade'.

They chose it especially so that no person would say it by accident. Each of the animals is sworn to defend Hogwarts to the last and will rise to defend it as soon as you enter the hall bringing news of danger.

Now to further protect the entry ways, the Founder's made it so that the entry ways could only be entered by the person who said the password and those he allows to go in. Also, if anyone else tries to listen to you while saying the password, all they would hear is gibberish." The Hat paused, and then frantically said, "Now make haste and leave, the Headmaster comes."

HEDWIG! Harry thought frantically. The Phoenix appeared beside the hat in a flash of light.

Aethan looked at the colorful bird. "A Phoenix already Mr. Potter? My, my, aren't you just full of surprises. Phoenix, kindly take these two to the Girls Bathroom of the Second Floor Corridor." The Phoenix trilled and disappeared, bringing with her the two brothers.

This time, the phoenix did not drop them ten feet from the air. It even stayed with them. "Harry, you're a Parseltongue. Try to open it."

Harry turned to stare at the insignia of the Founders. "Open Up" He said.

Alex shook his head. "That was English. Try again Harry. Concentrate."

"Open Up. Open Up! Open Up!" Harry yelled, frustrated.

The emblem started to disappear until only the snake was left. It opened its mouth. "As You Wish, Speaker." The entire sink complex started to turn and move until an opening was formed. "Hedwig, can you flash us down there?"

The Phoenix trilled before flying down the hole. Five minutes later, Hedwig flew back up from the hole before flashing both of them to the bottom of the pit. Usually, for a Phoenix to be able to flash somewhere, it or its master must have either been there before or can envision it in their minds.

The base of the hole was dark and the only reason they could see was because of Hedwig's light. Alex whipped out his wand and lighted two torches, handing one to Harry. The duo moved across the desolate underground halls in caution of traps and unwanted devices. Hedwig perched on Harry's shoulder, emitted a blue light to help them see better. Phoenixes had a vast array of abilities including lighting up their feathers.

Once they reached the door containing the Beast of Slytherin. So far, they hadn't encountered any traps. That was when they let their guard down. Big Mistake. A Big Stone Door hindered them from going any further. Of course, when they couldn't get it to open, they decided to take drastic measures.

"Ready? On three. One...Two...Three." Alex said. Two dark streaks of red light hit the stone door blowing, creating a rather large hole in the middle which they could pass through. Stepping through the self made entryway, Harry and Alex ambled through the dank hall.

As they did so, Harry stepped on a piece of marble that set off some rather nasty traps at them. Namely Poison Darts. Basilisk Venom Poison Darts. They barely saw it coming. The snake sculptures on either side of the hall started firing off the darts, specifically aiming it at them courtesy of some accuracy and movement enchantments.

There were a total of ten statues on each side; each firing a dart per second. Harry raised a shield while Alex started conjuring walls of stone to take cover behind. Hedwig merely flashed away, unable to help much at all. The walls of stone shielded them from the darts and allowed them to recover from the rapid suppressive fire.

BAM! A wall of stone exploded revealing five statues holding large metal scimitars enhanced to cut through anything. Alex blasted one's head sending bits of rubble around the rest. Instantly, blasting spells were sent towards the remaining statues, easily blowing them to bits.

Another ten Sculptures took up blades and charged at them while the last five covered them. It seemed the statues had adapted some sort of strategy. Alex pocketed his wand and picked up two scimitars. Harry, on the other hand, made a smoke screen cover. The darts stopped coming as the statues could no longer see or sense them.

Taking advantage of this, Harry sent a wave repulsion spell at them. Ten of the snake sculptures formed a 'V' Formation while the rest moved into positions behind them. Those in the V formation expanded their swords so that there was a blade on either side of the handle. Immediately, they started twirling the blades to negate the effects of the wave repulsion spell. The ones behind them started firing in volley at their general direction.

"We have to finish this soon Harry. They're getting better at fighting us every moment his battle is prolonged."

"Well, I'm," He blocked another dart coming his way, "open to any ideas you have."

"Provoke them into close quarter combat and follow me." Harry sent a wall of flame at the serpent warriors. They broke their formation and

charged at them fearlessly. Harry pocketed his wand and picked up a scimitar as well, expanding it like the charging statues did.

The smoke screen was starting to fade and the duo became hard pressed to defend against the incoming darts. Dropping their blades, the two of them dived into the water, hidden from the serpents. A full minute passed and there was still no sign of either of them.

Using the Ascending Charm, the brothers were able to go over the narrow hall. They took full advantage of this, they blasted the dart firing statues and finishing them for good. Drying themselves, the two turned to face the last of the statues. The snake sculptures charged at them at a furious pace.

Harry and Alex were able to destroy four of them before being forced to fight them with swords. The tide of battle turned against them as the superior swordsmanship and number of the granite statues forced them back slowly. Alex was hit with nearly hit with a fatal blow to the chest which only succeeded in knocking him down. A statue towered above him, sword raised high and ready to strike.

In fear, Harry yelled. "STOP!" The serpent's blade was an inch from taking the life of Alex. The rest of the statues stopped as well. Harry stared, dumbfounded. He doubted that ordering them in Parseltongue would work.

These things were skilled warriors and would be useful in guarding the chamber. "I am your new Master. Obey me and serve me as you are bound to do so to a Speaker of the noble tongue of Slytherin!" One by one, the sculptures knelt down in obedience.

Harry helped Alex up. "Tell your snake servants to guard the chamber and allow no one access except you and me." Alex said. Harry did so and the snakes instantly obeyed. "Come on, let's go and enter this library we're finding. The sooner we get there, the better."

It wasn't hard for them to find the library. Neither did they experience any difficulty in getting in. They spent the next few hours there, reading and generally acquiring more knowledge. The one thing that was most useful to them was an entire map of the underground

complex complete with a book with detailed information over any and everything about the defenses. They made copies of it in case one got destroyed.

Over the hours, they studied the defensive mechanisms of the place as well. It told them every trap, rune and ward in full detail. The statues were subject to a person's will once someone entered the chamber. They could by no means however be used to harm any of the inhabitants of the school.

Over all, it was a very fruitful excursion.

"So we are in agreement then, Mage." Slivenson said.

"Yes, we will strike today at the boy. The Mages of Anima will be ready by then. Get ready to pay us."

"Don't worry, if you succeed, you will be rewarded handsomely."

"The Mages of Anima never fail."

Slivenson smiled. "Make sure of it."

Please Review

Chapter Twelve: Occlumency and the Ambush

NA: This chapter was rather hastily written. I just got to writing it now. Rewritten Version. Sorry, forgot to add something at the end of chapter eleven. Please read the last part of the previous chapter before reading this one. Thanks

A week later...

With the assurance that the Chamber and its untold knowledge lay safe and sound, inaccessible to anyone but them, Harry and Alex explored the vast source of information with vigor. Harry spent his time trying to familiarize himself with the system of arrangement all the while taking mental notes of which books seemed interesting.

The place was huge. It had gigantic shelves filed with books, manuscripts, and scrolls of all topics, kinds, shapes and sizes. Necromancy, Runic Magic, Bonds and Promises, Magi Tongue, Ritualistic, Charms, Transformation, Offensive Lethal Magic...the list just went on and on. A small smile started to creep up his face.

Something about Elemental Magic was bound to be here as well. There had to be seeing as each of the founders was either an Elemental or Dual Elemental with specialties in no less than four different branches or sub-branches of magic. That was how much the average wizard knew back then. Now, most wizards barely specialized anymore. Laziness had taken its toll on the wizard populace.

One of the biggest misconceptions in the wizard communities was that elementals were rare. Out of a hundred people, at least seventy people were elementals of varying degree. Controlling and harnessing the power was a different matter entirely. You'd need to train constantly to even begin to harness the power.

Then after being able to tap into the power, you needed to master how to bend it to your will. Plus, it took a creative wizard to use it to its full extent. Not many books were written about techniques on using it. Creativity and diligence were perhaps the two things most wizards lacked aside from common sense or logical reasoning.

He found an entire shelf dedicated to Elemental Magic. Each book was several inches thick and hundreds of pages long. The books were surprisingly in perfect condition. A Stasis Field was probably cast in the area as it would be the only thing powerful enough to sustain the archaic texts. But these texts were over nine hundred years old! Few powers could sustain the magical properties of the Stasis Field for that long. Perhaps it was the school itself which was the strengthener? After all, permanent magical residences or locations tend to accumulate in magical strength after long periods of time.

Tracing his index finger along neatly place row of books, he picked out a book entitled "The Power". It was nearly a foot thick. Opening it, he read, surprisingly enough, the preface. Most books written by wizards had no prefaces.

Welcome Reader. There is only one book like this in the world that will give you more information on Elemental Magic in the World. Through this, I strive to allow the reader to understand Elemental Magic and all of its various aspects...its uses...for either organized peace...or total destruction. I warn those of you all now.

This is not for the faint of heart, weak willed, or the impatient. This book is not simply one to read, it is one which requires visualization, imagination, creative thinking, and logic amongst other things. If you survive with a sane mind after completing this book, you have proven that you are one of the best of the best of the best in elemental magic and its various aspects.

The first step to unraveling the secrets of this book, considering that you are up to the challenge, is to unlock the seal on this book. You will never be able to advance through the book without fulfilling all past challenges.

Good luck and God speed. You'll need it for the danger you will find within this ancient text.

-Myer Vox

lunctum quod Dominatus

(Unity and Mastery)

The book automatically snapped shut and a seal appeared on the cover preventing anyone from reopening it. The seal was circular and had white and black stripes circling around a gray orb in the middle. Curiously, Harry poked the orb with his newly drawn wand. The orb started to shimmer while the stripes around it began to swirl with rapid celerity.

A wave of light enveloped Harry completely. The light's glare was enough to blind him. After a moment, the light dimmed into a faint glow. He opened his eyes slowly to see a desolate desert with a small flourishing oasis in the middle. He stood atop of a cliff overlooking the vast oceans of sand. There were a few Baobab trees but they were few and far between.

Surprisingly, there was no scorching heat or dunes. There was only sand and the cliff he was standing on. Suddenly, the ground beneath him started to rumble. The sky turned blood red. Flaming meteors crashed into the earth obliterating what few trees were there. An intense light started moving towards the oasis at incredible speeds. Then, there was nothing.

Neat cursive writing appeared before Harry. It is sometimes better to destroy and rebuild than to try and fix the broken. Harry felt strangely relieved by these words. More writing started to form words. This is your mind. It is unprotected now. First, visualize two worlds side-by-side with a bridge connecting the two. This is the representation of the connection between the outside world and your mind.

Harry did as he was instructed forming two globes; one was a near replica of Earth, the other was merely a mass of sand. He put tremendous effort in forming a rather shaky bridge between the two planets.

Good, you have established the connection to reality. Now, create a small oasis in the middle of the desert.

Concentrating, Harry tried to imagine a small pool of water in the middle of all the sand. Nothing happened. Frowning, he tried again, this time putting a little energy in doing so. Slowly but surely, a hole formed and bits of water gathered, but it was hardly a pool. Trying again, he put all his energy in expanding the hole. The hole grew but the water became smaller still.

The water represents your connection to your secrets and thoughts. The bigger and deeper the oasis, the more defenses you can support. Use your Imagination. There is hardly any water in a desert such as this. To gather it in one place is futile. To keep it spread out will leave you hard pressed to defend all areas. Hence, the hole of water. Think of a better way fill up the hole.

Taking heed of the advise, he imagined rain clouds starting to form above. Rain poured from the clouds and flooded the desert in torrents of water. Harry smiled in satisfaction as the water flowed over the happiness was short lived, however, as rain continued to pour down upon his desert. The entire place was flooded with water rising above the sand.

Panicking a little, he made the clouds disappear to stop the rain from falling. Sighing, he surveyed the damage done.

Not so easy now is it? Create something to dry up the place faster. Start again after that. Creating a vortex in the sand, he drained the water out of the surface and stored it in an underground chamber directly beneath the small oasis he made. Harry cleared the sand between the two masses of water to form a small lake of a sort.

Good, now form a source of light and heat to this desert. He envisioned a miniature sized sun to light up the sky and provide heat. A red floating orb materialized in space and expanded in size. A second later, it lighted up, bringing warmth and light to the desert planet.

You're getting the hang of this aren't you? Well, lets get some life into this desert. You have a lot of work ahead of you before this becomes habitable. But first is first. We start at the bottom of the food chain, Plants and Trees.

Pooling his energy, he visualized seeds of all kinds to be planted. BANG! He was sent flying through the air.

Pathetic, I expected you to get this far at least. Worse than that, you've exhausted your mental strength. You'll be defenseless for days which is hardly ideal since many will now of your start in training of the mind arts. You are in a dismal state boy. And you have a lot of training to do before you get to my standards of acceptance.

A flash of light blinded him. When he opened his eyes again, he was back in reality. Only ten minutes had gone by. Astonishing! He felt as if he had spent the last hour participating in the mental exercise. It was apparent that time moved slower when doing said exercises. Feeling exhausted, he decided to leave.

"Is everyone ready?" A dark clad figure said.

"Yes. Morrison and his team are moving into position. By the time the target passes by this corridor, we will begin the ambush." Another figure responded.

"Very well. Remember we must leave no traces outside of the boy's injuries. Now return to your positions, I hear someone coming." The first figure commanded.

Harry stood in front of a seemingly blank wall of the underground exit of the Chamber. "Reveal." The wall split in two and a wooden camouflaged box appeared. There was a clear crystal board on it with Greek Letters on it. Harry punched the activation combination in.

A blinking sound emanated from the board and another section of the wall opened up. There was a compartment inside the newly formed hole. Harry stepped into the compartment and the wall behind him sealed up. A light buzzing sound could be heard as the compartment sped upwards and sideward at random intervals. The buzzing stopped suddenly and so did the movement.

Light flooded into the room again as the wall in front of him opened up revealing a random location on the Second Floor. He stepped out

of the compartment which instantly disappeared as he did. He walked down the corridor when a silver streaked light whizzed past him.

His instincts kicked in. He dove to the ground and drew his wand. Hundreds of spells, charms and curses streamed through his head, ready to be used depending and varying on the opponents he faced.

A stunning spell nearly hit him as he rolled to the side. Okay this is bad. Very, very bad. Harry thought. Aiming his wand, he shouted “koç baş”. A huge semisolid ox head shaped light shot out of his wand and onto the adjacent wall. The result was satisfactory as a figure thumped down to the floor, groaning in pain.

By now, the spell fire was becoming more like a barrage of magic as Harry was rained down upon by wave upon wave of not so nice spells. An Exploding Hex hit the floor a few meters in front of him. Now, most would think this was good since it didn't hit the person. Well, those people are either Optimistic or downright Morons. The shockwave from the spell was enough to send Harry flying towards a wall.

The impact was painful, to say the least. Harry was beginning to lose focus. He saw about eighteen or so figures approaching him, wands drawn and pointed at him. Harry was going into full blown panic now. Gathering his energy in his left hand, he blasted a nearby attacker with pure raw magic.

He was quickly drying up his Magical Reserve. He could do wandless magic, yes, but to do it was a huge drain on him. Pointing his wand to the stone floor, he cast the Ice Field Jinx. Water came out of his wand and rapidly froze upon impact of the ground. With a barrier of ice prohibiting his ambushers from approaching any further, he concentrated on defending himself from the barrage of spell fire.

Harry took the shields from suits of armor. Using the two shields, he tried to block the incoming spells. Problem was, the robed and masked figures started throwing Exploding Hexes at him. The shields, metal as they were, were quickly blown to bits. Fortunately and unfortunately, this made shrapnel fly and hit over a dozen of them including Harry.

It was painful, very, very painful. Most of those which were hit were on the floor, crying, screaming, or likewise. Harry, however, had no such pleasure. Wounded or not, he was still under attack. The situation had gone from bad to worse in five minutes. He was injured, could barely stand, slightly dazed, and had little to no magic left to use.

Using his last resort, Harry let the darkness take over him. He suddenly had no control over his body and that was the last thing he remembered.

This was supposed to be a simple mission for the Mages of Anima. The Mages of Anima were student mercenaries who were elitists of a sort. Their group was very secret and old. They were a tightly knit group with informants in every circle and area of the school. The Staff had been trying to catch them for ages but they were smart and sneaky. They have never been detected.

There were suspicions of who members could be, but suspicions were useless unless they had proof. The tradition of the Mages of Anima had been passed down from generation to generation. The leader right now was Christopher Mitch. He was their elite strategist and researcher. He was a muggleborn, one of the best in his class, and about sixteen in age.

It had gone well so far, except now, over two-thirds of them were out of the fight. The kid was far better than they had thought. "Hey Christopher, I think he's out." Said a masked figure next to him.

"Alright, we're done here, Morris. Clean up and let's go. We have to get out of here before anyone finds out." Jonathan Morris was the second in command to Mitch. "Get Gretchen and her Healers out here now. And where's Norman with the Emergency Portkeys he promised?" He stopped dead in his tracks as he saw what was happening.

The boy had a weird blue glow surrounding him. He was holding the ice. And he was manipulating it to attack them. Several Ice Golems rose up and used very large sharp weapons of ice to smash and slice them with.

“Oh my God! Everyone abort this mission now! We have a freaking Berserk Elemental on us.” Christopher blasted an Ice Golem with a Bludgeoning Hex. Out of the thirty people in the Mages of Anima under his command, only eleven would be able to escape by themselves.

“Morris, double shield defense on three. One...Two...Three!” Mitch sent a Protego shield. Morris cast an Ageo Tectum behind his initial Protego Shield. The idea behind the Double Shield Defense was genius actually. The idea was to cast standard shield to cover a bigger area while a stronger shield was placed behind it to strengthen the first shield. The stronger shield provided support to make sure the first shield didn’t break.

They cast the Double Shield in front of their companions. They might have been a mercenary group but they were a very loyal group. All along the corridor, similar techniques were used to stop the advance of the Ice Golems.

Seeing the apparent success of their new stratagem, Mitch said, “Come on, let’s move people. We have to get out of here now.” Everyone grabbed a portkey and ported away. Harry was left half dead on the ice vaporized floor.

Footsteps echoed through the hall as Dumbledore, McGonagall, and Snape appeared. “What happened here? Who did this to you Mr. Potter?” McGonagall asked.

“Th...The...Ma...Mage...Mages...The Mages of...An...Ani...Anima.” The three professors rapidly paled upon hearing the barely uttered words.

The Prodigy has been attacked by the Mages of Anima. And the attack was more vicious then before.

The Mages of Anima are a very eccentric Group. Because of their old tradition and close contacts, many graduated members worked in the ministry. This is said to be one of the key reasons why they had so may untrackable equipment and informants.

-excerpt from Hogwarts: A History, revised edition by Hermione Granger

Please Review. Please Review.

Chapter 13: Vengeance against the Mages

Thirty Minutes later...

Madam Pomfrey hurriedly worked on the boy, fighting to save his life. Severus was busy brewing a Vein Stabilizer Potion to save the boy from Magical Vein Collapse. Magical Veins were passageways in which magic circulated throughout one's body. If one was damaged or even destroyed, that person's ability to do magic would be disrupted. Such collapses also caused Death quickly. What was most dangerous about the boy right now was his overly weakened physical state. Magic could only do so much to help him recover.

There were some Healers from St. Mungoes helping out at the request of the Potters. After all, the boy was part of their family. James and Lily might have neglected him, but they didn't hate him. Madam Pomfrey sighed, recalling her conversation with the Potters.

Flashback

James and Lily Potter stormed into the infirmary. Madam Pomfrey was getting ready to perform the patching when they barged in. The two approached her hastily. "Poppy, where's my son! Where is Harry? Is he alright? Who did this to him?" He asked rapidly.

"Harry was attacked by a group called the Mages of Anima. His Magical Veins are unstable and he's suffering from internal bleeding. We're preparing to patch it up now. Severus is brewing a Magical Vein Sustainer to help the veins stabilize. I won't lie to you. It's very probable that he will die before tomorrow from either the damage done to his body or the strain on his magic. Excuse me, I must go oversee the patching operation."

"J-James w-what i-if he doesn't m-make i-it? H-he's t-t-too young t-to die! W-we b-b-barely e-even k-k-know h-h-him a-anymore! W-what i-i-if he d-dies hating u-us?" She asked, sobbing uncontrollably as she did.

James tried his best to soothe the crying woman, but to no avail. He was worried about Harry too. He hadn't been a father to him these

past few years. Nothing he could do would change that simple fact. And he would regret that forever.

End Flashback

None of them had noticed a man standing on the branch of a tree, from a distance, listening to their every word. He wore a green dragon hide vest and was armed with a double bladed sword. At the base of the tree was an Arabian Wind Mare, one of the fastest horses on earth. He jumped from the branch silently and landed on the back of the horse. He took one last look at the castle before riding away at full speed with only one thought in mind. An Heir to the throne has been found. I must warn the Council.

Alex and Cedric stalked a fifth year named Arthur Goldstray under the cover of an invisibility cloak. Goldstray was a prime suspect for being part of the Mages of Anima. He was a top student with high marks, especially so in Charms and Transfiguration. Arthur was, unknowingly, leading them back to a hideout of the Mages.

But he was not stupid enough to go in plain sight. He was under an Invisibility Charm. However, he forgot something about it. People under charms like invisibility and notice me not still had visible shadows which could be seen. These were not affected by the charms. It was rather impractical of schools to teach these sort of spells until they learned to cast the Shadow Meld Charm. A Shadow Meld Charm was designed to refract light away from the effected person or object, thus giving the illusion that the person did not have a shadow.

The wizarding world was rather slow on such matters and most never bothered to find out about such a thing of “meager importance”. The smarter wizards were the ones who decided to learn such details in spells, more often than not helping them in a way. It was these tiny things that separated the professionals from the mediocre.

Alex and Cedric had no hope of going up against what they perceived to be a heavily warded room housing several older, dangerous

students who outnumbered and outclassed them. The only reason they had suffered so many casualties when they faced Harry was because he unleashed Raw Elemental Magic against them. It was very improbable that they could beat them in an encounter such as this. It was for this reason that they were merely pinpointing the location of the hideout for the Aurors.

The Aurors had been ordered by the Ministry to arrest the Mages at all costs and to maintain guard over Hogsmeade in case the Mages attacked again. It was rather stupid to do so. A regular wizard would take ten minutes to run from the edge of the grounds to the castle. By then, they would be panting. It would take another twenty minutes to run to where they currently were.

The Mages of Anima had an extensive spy network at their disposal and anyone going near their hideout with enough authority to hinder their operations was treated with utmost caution by them, usually evacuating the premises. However, if they were able to somehow seal off the exits, it might buy the Aurors enough time to rush in and apprehend them.

Now the problem became how to stall the Mages long enough. Conventional means could easily be broken or overridden by this rather Intelligent and Superior Group. Runes and Wards might have more success but the Mages had Runists and Warders with them as well, having skills far above that of Alex. They'd just have to pray one wasn't with them. The Mages tended to have several hideouts in which held an equal amount of people. Each one was manned by at least two Mages at all times.

But, plans didn't always turned out as planned. This wouldn't be an exception to that.

Goldstray had brought them to a room in the Fifth Floor East Wing. There were several wards behind the door, making it nearly impossible to break in. Alex started drawing a Sealing Rune on the door while Cedric was busy checking the Rogue's Map if there were any other ways to leave the room.

They worked methodically, closing off the exit points one at a time to make sure each one was blocked off properly. They used a variety of runes and wards on the doors and barriers to block off the hidden passageways such as walls and boulders. Fortunately, the passageways only led to a distant wall further up making it easier to block. With the obstacles in place, Alex and Cedric planted the Signaling Charm on the door to alert the Aurors of their location.

The Charm affected only a specified group of people, usually Aurors, to something or someone's location. The place's name appeared in their mind as an illusion as well as direction on how to get there. Alex watched the Map tensely. The moment the Aurors appeared on the grounds, the Mages would try to break out. Blue Dots which represented the Aurors suddenly started to appear on the map.

In a clear voice, he said, "Sensory Mode, Activate"

The words "Password Required" appeared on the Map.

"I Call Upon the Aid of the Sense of Magic." Alex said hastily.

Some highlights appeared on the map with lists beside these highlighted areas. It showed every warded area in the map. "Center My Position." Alex ordered. The Map changed rapidly until it showed where he was. Unlike the Marauders Map, this one was composed of only one parchment and was designed to change the area viewed upon voice commands.

He enlarged the list near his icon on the map. There were several wards there ranging from the Standard Strengthening Ward to the Specialized Static Trap Ward. The good news was that they needed to take down all their wards down first before they could counteract the effects of the Sealing Rune. The bad news was that they were taking down the wards far quicker than expected.

He watched nervously as ward after ward disappeared from the list of active emplacements. The Aurors wouldn't come for another twenty minutes and more than half the barriers were already down. Alex pulled out his wand, readying himself to fight, and Cedric followed suit.

Glancing at the paper, he saw there were only three wards left to take down.

Two

One

BANG! The door was vaporized as five simultaneous Exploding Hexes hit it with full force. The rune was undone. The Mages had broken the enchantments. The Aurors still needed a good fifteen minutes to arrive and that did not help Alex's nervousness about having to face the Mages at pointblank range.

Alex immediately sent a Repulsion Spell towards the door while Cedric busily conjured stone walls to take cover behind. Hexes and Curses of various kinds were thrown back at them in retaliation. The two ducked behind a conjured stone wall. It was times like this that Alex was thankful he decided to bring Harry's Potions Kit with him. Inside were an assortment of freshly brewed potions.

He uncorked a vial containing a smoky blue substance which could only be identified as Shadowshade Gas. It would create a smokescreen to obscure the vision of everyone, an advantage and a disadvantage to both sides.

This was supposed to be a regular day for Arthur Goldstray. He had been inducted into the Mages of Anima just a few weeks ago and had gotten used to the normal routine there. Then came the fiasco with the attack on Potter. He had incapacitated over half of their standing number, though most were relatively minor injuries healed quickly. The Potters backed by the Ministry were hunting them down and their sympathizers within the Ministry could do nothing yet. The Malfoys and Longbottoms were also pushing for this to happen.

But now, they were being blockaded by someone while Aurors were coming. "APPROXIMATELY TEN MINUTES BEFORE AURORS ARRIVE!" Blared the Auror Alert system. With him were four other Mages, only one of them being a seventh year and obviously their squad leader due to seniority. "We're not going to make it outside this

with that Shadowshade gas outside. Let's get out of here. Initiate Escape Maneuver Epsilon-Red-32." Said Galen Crever, their leader.

Two of them started firing spells rapidly while the rest moved towards a segment of the wall, tapping certain bricks to reveal the hidden exit. To their dismay, a giant boulder blocked their way. They blasted it into pebbles before proceeding further. The other two weren't far behind. Their unknown assailants were at their heels, chasing them viciously. The echo of the Auror alert system's warning could still be heard.

"APPROXIMATELY TWO MINUTES BEFORE AURORS ARRIVE. EVACUATE THE PREMISES IMMEDIATELY AND FALLBACK TO THE NEAREST HIDEOUT."

This was bad, they had an unknown amount of obstacles to get through. Galen signaled to the two behind them to hold off the attackers, a desperate rearguard action. The rest of them started clearing the barriers wildly in a desperate attempt to escape. Their only hope was that the others found a way to intercept the Aurors.

Alex and Cedric began dueling their skilled adversaries with fierce determination. Spells, Curses, Hexes, Jinxes, and Charms crisscrossed between the four, each side trying to defeat their enemy. A Thunder Slam Hex hit Cedric in the stomach. It was followed quickly by a Stunner which was deflected by Alex. Cedric and Alex cast two Comet Strike Hexes one after the other against.

One of the Mages they were fighting sidestepped the spell, only to be hit in the arm by the other Hex. The man fell violently and a throbbing pain incapacitated his arm. Snarling, the man sent a Ramming Hex at Cedric while his companion cast several Slicing Spells.

Cedric raised a shield to stop the potentially fatal spells as Alex pooled together his Magic. With one swift movement, lightning burst from his wand, electrocuting both of their enemies. The other three had already broken through the obstacles and were escaping. The duo pursued them, only to find over two dozen Aurors sending stunning spells at the three obviously outnumbered and outclassed students.

Kingsley Shacklebolt was the Auror in charge. He turned to face the two. "You boys did a fine job delaying them. I'll be sure to pass this on to my superiors." He said as his men bound the Mages. "These five will be interrogated for further information regarding the Mages of Anima. After that, they will be sent to Recolo Institute until they turn seventeen. Take them away men."

Alex grinned as he heard the verdict. His vengeance was complete at last.

Mitch scowled as he heard the news of what happened with his men. "Sir, what should we do?" Asked a Mage.

"Nothing. We do nothing. Its obvious that they are done hunting us down. We lay low and we train. All Operations are halted, all missions aborted. I'm no fool. we stand no chance against them. They will crush us eventually. And it would be best not to provoke them into doing so. From here on, the Mages are to take on no more jobs until I say so." Mitch said, rubbing his forehead. He was a muggleborn and he didn't exactly share the incompetence or idiocy found commonly among magic users.

"But Mitch, what about tradition! What about our dignity and pride? What about the funding?" Asked Morris.

"Tradition? We were never supposed to be mercenaries in the first place! Pride and Dignity? There is none of that in our lifestyle! We are nothing but greedy, venal, men seeking the easy way out. It is time for change Morris. That time is now."

"And you would leave our incarcerated comrades behind?" Morris asked vehemently. Several of the Mages visibly agreed with him.

"You should be glad not all of us were taken." Mitch said, walking away.

Meanwhile...

"Are you quite sure about this boy being an Heir?" A voice said.

"Yes Sir. " The spy replied respectfully.

"Curious, very curious..."

"Sir? What are your orders?"

"Assemble the Dragon Elite. Tell them to find out more about this Harry Potter."

"At once, Council Lord." The man bowed and left the room in a rush.

"...The Mages of Anima in recent years had stopped attacking students and conducting raids. Their turning into a more peaceful group is thought to be caused by the Raid of 2002 led by Senior Auror Kingsley Shacklebolt and Alex Potter, Lord of Azkaban, as well as Cedric Diggory, Head of the Department of War (formed on the year 2005). It is believed that they became scared of the Potter Vengeance and decided to stop operations in fears of being crushed. The Potter Family no longer pressed for their arrests after the first raid and hostilities died down. As of the year 2004, they have been removed from the list of illegal organizations. They still remain their secrecy to this day and have trained some of the most important Wizards in the World. As of 2010, they have spread to become worldwide in hopes of enriching potentially powerful students and children everywhere..."

"The first signs of their aggression seems to have appeared somewhere during 1766. They had many expensive operations and experiments being conducted at the time and lacked the funds to do so. In a desperate effort, they had gradually turned themselves into mercenaries to save the organization. Since then, they have began changing, amending and in some cases demolishing the ideals of the group when it was first founded in the year 1575..."

-excerpt from: Important Groups of the World, Section XX: UK, Chapter XX! by Mohammed Nahir, standard book regarding groups across the world.

Chapter 14: Recovery and Plots

February 5, 2001 (One week after the raid against the Mages)...

Edward Krishenger looked around the room suspiciously. He had gotten a note to come here earlier. Normally, he would discard the note and ignore it but this one was... persuasive. It spoke of promises to restore the Mages to its former glory. He was befuddled as to who could have sent it.

It would be a Mage for sure since no one outside their group had found out about the new changes being implemented. The problem was that few people would have the nerve to send a message like that to him. He had a vicious reputation among the Mages to be particularly vindictive as a Senior Mage. Those higher in rank than him were too loyal or scared of Mitch.

"Welcome Krishenger, so glad you could make it." Said an unknown figure. Edward pulled out his wand on instinct.

"Who are you and why did you send for me?" Edward demanded pointing his wand at the unidentified person.

The figure visibly smiled before stepping into the light. Edward's eyes widened. It was Morris. "I want you to join me. United, the true Mages will be able to overthrow Mitch and his band of traitorous followers."

Edward thought over it a while before giving his decision. "I will join you." Morris' smile grew even wider. Within the week, they'd have a clear majority supporting them.

Glint Forest, Strabane, Northern Ireland...

Augustus Rookwood lay silently in the forest, watching for any Aurors or Hunters. He had been on the run for months now after the disastrous attack on Hogwarts. Despite public belief, not all the Death Eaters were captured. There were about two hundred of them still lurking around in these parts. Their large number was mostly due to the Aurors incompetence.

They had chosen to hide here because the Auror Command had little control here. At most, there were only a hundred Aurors supported by three hundred Civil Guards and Militia scattered throughout various wizarding towns. They could not afford to bring in any more reinforcements.

So, as of now, they were at a standstill. They, the convicts, could not hold a place for too long before being rooted out. However, they could not be completely eliminated as well. But plans were underway to rectify that. Ireland would fall by the month's end. The revolution would live with them. They would not forsake the cause or the Dark Lord as easily as their cowardly brethren had who pleaded innocence.

Harry's Mind...

Harry sat on the edge of the cliff, overlooking the oasis in the middle of the plain of sand. Some weeds could be seen growing around the pool of water. "So my young student, how is it that I find you here again?" Harry turned around to face an elderly man leaning on a staff.

"Who are you?" Harry asked. "Why are you here?"

"I am a mental impression of Myer Vox, left behind to train the next generation of Elementals. I am here because you allow me to." The old man replied calmly. "You see me now only because you are unconscious to the outside world. Had you accessed this place through the book, you would have still been awake and able to break out at any time. Right now, you cannot."

"So I have essentially become a prisoner of my mind."

"Yes."

"How can I get out?"

"With Patience and time, you will be able to leave. But while you're here, let's get to work. Those weeds around your oasis must be destroyed. They are weak points in your future mental shields." Harry imagined a small fire to burn the parasites. Small fires appeared at the top of the plants, burning them slowly.

“Good, you’re learning control. Now, there are two main types of defenses which you can use. There are the trees and wildlife, which are natural defenses of the mind. And then there are the castles, walls, and soldiers which represent your self erected defenses. For now, the conditions are not ideal to create Natural Defenses. That leaves us with your second choice.

You must visualize a strong centerpiece for your new fortress to house your oasis. This oasis, though not containing all your memories, is the most important. It represents your early childhood, which is what shapes a person. This will become the cornerstone and center of your entire mental defensive system.”

Harry visualized a sturdy, stone house to cover the oasis. To his dismay, nothing happened. “You forget that things do not materialize out of thin air. You need equipment, blueprints, plans...you don’t seriously expect it to just appear. Such a thing would be catastrophic.”

Harry waved his hand in one sweeping motion. The sand on the ground flew up into the sky and was promptly deposited somewhere else, forming an unusually large, lone dune in the desert. Concentrating, Harry imagined some Mithril being extracted from the ground.

With a firm picture in his mind, he lifted his hands and immediately, wisps of gas started flowing out of the hole. The gases started to swirl around forming a monumental chunk of Solid Mithril around the oasis. The deposit was about 70 feet wide and 50 feet tall.

Myer nodded his head approvingly at the display of control. “Now, here comes the hard part. You have to craft the Mithril into a sort of mini fort and place mental illusions as well as representation of your mental control. Usually, this is done by creating stone soldiers armed with weapons and the like.”

“Why do I need to do that? Wouldn’t the Mithril be essentially enough to block an assault?” Harry asked.

“Perhaps you would like to test that theory.” With that said, Myer and Harry both dissipated into thin air. Harry found himself overlooking the area. He scanned the plain of sand and spotted a dark shadow moving towards the oasis at alarming speed. The barrier of metal did nothing to hinder the shadow as it went over the wall and landed easily near in the oasis.

Harry flinched a little as visions of his past flashed before his eyes; Images of his childhood. The memories stopped. Harry was panting on the floor, looking into the face of Myer.

“Well, I think you’ve learned your lesson.” Myer paused for a while before continuing. “This place is fading. You are about to wake. Work on your shields, boy. I want the Core Barrier ready before our next meeting.” Their surroundings slowly faded away, Myer disappearing with it.

A flash of light blinded suddenly him. Its glare died down a bit and he opened his eyes groggily. He found himself in the Infirmary, looking into the face of his brother. “So, you decide to finally wake up then.” Alex said. “You know, you’re a moron for doing what you did.”

Harry dropped his head at hearing the disappointment in his mentor’s voice. “You should have flashed out of there with Hedwig. And what the Hell were you thinking? Trying to fight against more than fifty students whom almost killed you had it not been for the fact that you unleashed your elemental ability. They know something else about you now. Something they could use to their advantage.”

An awkward silence followed. “What happened while I was unconscious?” Harry asked after a moment.

“Well, Cedric and I have sent a few Mages to prison. I found out that the Mages are not backing down as well. Slivenson and some other unidentified group have begun sheltering the Mages from political persecution. Surprisingly, it’s been limited to only some of them. I found out from Percival that Mage Alumni have infiltrated the Ministry. He is an excellent spy and source of information by the way. How did you manage to get him to work for you?”

“He is rather, how do I say it, ‘disgruntled’ with the present government. He wishes to reform them into a more reliant, stable, and competent one. I have promised to support him in exchange for his services and input in things.” Harry answered.

Alex raised a brow. “Your support doesn’t mean much to many people.”

“He ‘sees’ that I will become an important and influential person someday by my connections now. The Malfoys and the Longbottoms will be behind me. With the Potters added to that and our sister’s fame well, it is a force to reckon with.”

“One which could not push for the persecution of the remaining Mages might I add.” Alex grumbled.

“That is mostly due to the Alumni of the Mages providing a political shield. Besides, he believes that by supporting me, I will restore the Weasley’s name, honor, and power to as it was a hundred years ago.”

“That’s an ambitious goal for a Gryffindor. But we don’t even know who cheated them out. No one does.”

“He found out the identity of the mysterious thief while searching through the Family Archive Vault. He plans to crush them.”

Alex nodded his head understandingly. Revenge was a powerful motivator. “Now, because of these recent setbacks, your training has been interrupted. I have to start training you more now. We need to get you back in shape.

From now on, I want you running three laps around the Black Lake. That should be about ten kilometers all in all. Now, you will be practicing swordsmanship and weaponry handling an at least every day against ten dummies at Average Level. You will practice casting the last few spells in the Third Year Curriculum you have not yet mastered.

I will have to teach you more about Runic and Ward Defenses too. And you will have to begin learning Basic Offensive Non-Verbal Magic. We've neglected your learning in that field so far. You'll need to brush up on your Wandless Magic as well. I want you to be fairly proficient in Occlumency by the end of the year, am I understood?"

"Yes Alex." Harry replied obediently.

"So tell me how's your Occlumency Shields?" Alex inquired curiously.

"I'm beginning creation of the Cornerstone Shield."

Alex raised a brow at him. "That far already? It's very hard to get there."

"Not hard. You just need control." Harry said.

"True, true. But the concept of control is hard for many to grasp. Even though we the magic users have control over our magic we still place too many limitations on ourselves based merely on the fact that others failed. A prime, but indirect, example of the negative effects of laziness and fear of failure."

"Alex, where exactly is Madam Pomfrey?" Harry asked, wondering why the fierce patron had not kicked his brother out for 'disturbing a patient's sleep and disturbing the Infirmary'.

"She's gone to the weekly staff meeting for discussion on the events so far." Looking at his wristwatch, he continued. "I'd say we still have a good thirty minutes before she comes back."

Growing up in the Potter Household had certain advantages to it. The mixture of muggle and magical culture was one of those advantages. Wristwatches didn't run on electricity technically and so were not disrupted by the dense magic in the area. It worked through a series of springs and gears.

A simple Precision Charm was all that was needed to make sure that it was always the correct time with maybe a Repairing Charm with a Renewal Charm every year or two to keep it in shape was all the

maintenance needed. Maybe an Unbreakable Charm placed if the person wanted. The product was a precise time keeper which would never be destroyed; far cheaper than anything technology or magic could produce alone. Most magic users couldn't even produce a simple piece of technomancy despite the fact that it was so simple.

This just proved one more thing about the magical community. Most of them were nonsensical, lazy morons.

Chapter 15: Training and Insurrection

One Month later...

The month passed quickly for Harry with the accelerated training taking up most of his time. Draco spent most of his time with his new fiancée/girlfriend while Neville started to hang out with more of his Housemates. The Mages were actively becoming more violent it seemed with their blatant attacks on the student population. The staff oblivious as they are, were actually able to keep order.

Harry lay still under the shadow's cover, hidden from plain sight. Although it would have certainly been easier to place a disillusionment charm on himself, magical detectors and sight enhancements would still be able to see through the charm. They would not detect, however, one who was hidden without magic. Muggle Stealth techniques still had its uses after all.

A rustling sound alerted Harry of a nearby presence. He began scanning the bushes and trees cautiously, his wand and sword at the ready. He was ready to use a dozen different spells for any situation here. A slight movement from a nearby bush caused him to smile. Sentry detected. He thought.

He aimed his wand at the bush and silently cast a Burning Charm. The conjured fire was easily burning the pile of leaves. A dummy crawled out of the bush, clearly confused as to why his hiding spot was on fire. It was barely halfway out when Harry moved towards it inconspicuously. The dummy never stood a chance. It was cut in half at the waist before it could even turn to see who its attacker was.

Harry quickly dragged the dummy into a nearby bush to avoid detection from the other nineteen or so magically enchanted practice things lurking around trying to find him. His exercise today was infiltration and elimination. He was to enter a specific area and destroy all hostile figures in there while avoiding detection as much as possible.

He moved away from the place quickly, towards what he perceived to be the area he needed to enter. The place turned out to be a fort with

a huge metal door and walls the height of five men. He shortened his sword until it was the size of a knife. You see, the beauty of the double bladed sword was that both blades could be lengthened and shortened from five feet long to non-existence. Such a blade was still being made of course but that's never stopped the Room of Requirements from making one has it?

The young elemental trainee tied a piece of conjured rope to the hilt of his knife before sending a streak of light towards the gate. The dummies guarding the outside moved to investigate where its source was from while those on top of the walls massed on the side near the gate. Harry ran through the forest unopposed, flanking the stupid practice figurines.

There were only two guards at the rear wall. He sent two petrifying spells at the two, effectively stopping them from raising the alarm. He threw his knife at a dummy. The blade was embedded deep into the dummies chest, making it safe to climb up the rope. And climb the rope Harry did. He pulled out his knife from the dummies fiber-like chest and pushed the remaining one down the wall.

Harry turned around to see a back door. He opened it and went inside. The inside was not impressive. Five Dummies were standing guard over what seemed to be the Rogue Map which was on a table. Annoyed, the sneaky eleven year old boy blasted them to pieces with his wand. They never had a chance. Alex, must be loosing his touch. This is far too easy. Harry thought.

He grabbed the Map and carefully put it in his pocket. That was when things got bad. The door he used sealed itself up with a triggered Sealing Rune. A dozen or so dummies appeared. One of them was at Elite level, the highest level of the dummies. Narrowing his eyes, Harry quickly sent several Shockwave Spells at them in an effort to slow them down. Speed would be the key here. He had to eliminate the Elite Dummy before it could attack.

He extended his sword to full length on both sides and began cutting his way through anything that stopped him. Within seconds half the dummies were cut into pieces. Those precious few seconds were all the elite needed, however, to get back on his feet, dispelling the

notion of a quick strike. Harry looked scanned his enemies. This was going to be a long, hard fight.

Harry ominously swung his weapon in the air. This seemed to make the dummies hesitate. That was all Harry needed to go into the offensive again. He smashed his blade to the ground while in a crouching position to stop a dummy from coming closer and turned around in time to cut off the leg of a dummy, making it fall to the ground. He finished it off with a quick slash to the heart.

He rolled to the side avoiding the blades of two of the dummies. Pointing his wand at the two, he muttered incoherently for a while before both of them burst into flames. Another dummy tried to put out the fires only to be consumed by the fire. Two more to go.

The other dummy was quickly dealt with. A simple Concussion Hex took care of it. For the Elite, however, such tricks would not work. Both of them rushed at each other with their blades at the ready. Their swords clashed with each other as each one tried to make the other lose balance. Suddenly, Harry dropped to the ground and swiped his foot at the elite's knee. The elite wobbled a little but nonetheless still stood. Harry acted quickly, thrusting his weapon upwards.

The attack was deflected quickly but the damage was done. It gave Harry enough time to bring his foot to the Elite's ribcage. Harry stood back up quickly and sent another kick towards the Dummy's chest. This time, the Elite was ready for it. It quickly dropped its weapon and trapped the leg between its two hands. He twisted the leg causing Harry to turn in the air and fall back to the ground painfully.

Harry grinned as this happened. While he was being twisted, he had took out his wand and readied himself to fire a Stunner at it. The Elite never knew what hit it as it was sent flying into the air a few feet from Harry. Harry finished it off with a simple Blasting Hex, preferring to finish it swiftly less it came back to life.

The forest and its surroundings were quickly replaced by that of the Room of Requirements. Harry stood up and faced Alex. Alex nodded approvingly at him. "Well done, Harry. It seems the accelerated

training suits you. I want you to stay in condition and build up your mental shields.”

“That’s it?” Harry asked, sounding somewhat disappointed.

“Yes.”

“Alex, we need to start taking the offensive against the Mages soon. They get bolder as each day passes. Harassment, Ambushes, Extortion of the Prefects, they’re taking over the school. It’s only a matter of time before they start going after us. We need to stop them before it gets that far.”

“We’re hard pressed as it is to find a new location. In addition to that, we don’t have the Aurors on standby to help us. The thing is, while all this is happening, nearly a quarter of the Mages still aren’t involved or informed even these happenings.” Alex said, rubbing his forehead.

“Well what does that mean?”

“If my guess is right, someone high up in the Mage Hierchy is plotting to overthrow the current leader. That would be asking for civil war.”

“Why would there be civil war? The Mages’ conflict is hardly enough to be called civil war.”

“Slivenson is involved. It’s bound to be civil war whenever he’s around to mess things up.

That’s why we are training. If the situation ever gets out of hand, they’ll call in Aurors. That might not be enough to keep peace here. If ever, it might even trigger more violence. You have to be able to hold them off until help arrives. With this apparent insurrection going on in the Mages, I fear we’re going to have to weather the storm that’s soon to follow.

Of course, we know Slivenson has been in regular contact with the mutinous section of the Mages. Let’s just hope that they can get the Aurors here quickly.”

Mage Outpost...

Krishenger looked at the message happily. Today was the moment he and the other loyalists were waiting for. The reformists scum would be weeded out from their system.

We Strike Now. Activate Operation New Dawn.

New Dawn. The day where they would finally return the Mages back to its former glory. The day they would strike back against those who dared attack them. Diggory and the eldest Potter. The message was repeatedly shown all across the school in hidden outposts. Together as one they marched solemnly towards the Mage Headquarters.

Mage Headquarters...

Christopher Mitch was scanning the new reports he had gotten. Increased violence in the school had been happening and still none of their intelligence networks could report anything credible.

He was more than surprised to see that thirty six of his remaining forty-five mages appeared in his Headquarters demanding he resign as Mage Superior. He was even more surprised when he saw Morris joining them.

"Morris, how could you betray me?" He asked angrily at his former friend and confidant.

"You have lost sight of the old ways, Mitch. Your reign is over. We rule now." He stated triumphantly.

"I will not go down without a fight. I have supporters to you know. I have vast reserves to call on if the need arises. I can get the Aurors involved even. I have more than enough power, influence, and men to put up a resistance. The Potters will not allow you to just let chaos run wild in this school, neither will Dumbledore. You are walking on thin ice here."

"Even so, from here on out, You, Christopher Morris, and all of your followers, sympathizers and supporters within the Mages of Anima

are hereby expelled from this order.” Mitch’s followers cheered as Morris walked out of the room in a rage. “Now we must act quickly. Go to your houses and call for the support of the leaders in this. War is upon us.”

Within the hour, every Mage of each side was preparing for war. Within the day, the smaller student groups involved with Mages were mobilizing. Within the week, the school would be plunged into civil war.

“...The tragic ordeal of the Hogwarts’ split is still well remembered to this day. The former mercenary group rose up against its leader under the command of Senior Mage Morris. They had gathered support at an unprecedented rate and began a purge within their group. Slivenson was one of their main supporters and his popularity and fame was a key factor to their hasty rise. However, this event is thought to have been a major blow to his popularity among the people after the Mages were put down.

The Potter family’s role in this was also very important. Their children put up a staunch resistance against the mages while their parents strove to break the political support of the mages. Reasons of why the students of Hogwarts for joining into the violence is believed to be faulted to the Group Leaders and Heads for being overly supportive to either of the Mages. The majority of these Leaders at first refused any active involvement but attacks launched on them Mage Fanatics caused them to react aggressively...”

-excerpt from: Hogwarts’ History Guide Chapter XXXI by Hermione Granger, standard book of information to Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry

Chapter 16: Pointless Conflicts and that Blasted Stone

Dumbledore sat in his chair thinking over the events that had happened. The year was coming to a close end and still the Mages were persistent to fight. The conflict within the Mages had started slowly. The battles were few and far between. Then just last week, they began daily fights. Helpless Students lay in between these Spell Battles.

The Ministry, in an attempt to keep peace, had sent in dozens of Aurors to diffuse these situations and capture any student actively involved in the large scale duels. This worked for only a small amount of time. The Mages, cunning as they were, started employing extreme guerilla techniques to fight with. This war had already sent more than twenty five students to the Hospital Wing.

Surprisingly, some students had been aiding the Mages. Slivenson and his group actively supported the larger Mage group while the Potters were openly against both sides. All in all, it was a bad year. His most promising students were waging war against each other with several student groups were taking sides as the Potters did. Hogwarts was plunged into school wide conflict in a little over two months.

Dumbledore shook his head sadly. Voldemort would be making his move to take the Stone soon. Now was the perfect time to do so to. With chaos abound, no one would realize it until it was too late. The aged Headmaster activated his portkey that would take him to the Ministry for a meeting in the Wizengamot to discuss how to stop the violence in his Institution.

Hours Later...

A spell zipped past Mitch and slammed into the wall behind him. He retaliated with a wave of stunners. This 'battle' had been going on for hours with the remnants of his men fighting off yet another assault by Morris' fanatical Mages. He dodged another spell and sent a wave of rapidly cast stunners. So far, both sides hadn't gained an upper hand yet.

Mitch had the advantage of experience on his side. Most of the Senior Mages had sided with him. However, what Morris lacked in skill, he made up for in superior numbers. They had outnumbered them three to one. Those odds were not good. And then there the Rogue Groups as they were called. The Rogue Groups were students who had banded together against both groups. They were more of an association really. Their goal was to provide safe passage for their members throughout the school.

The Aurors also played a significant role in this conflict. Because of their presence in certain areas, such places were considered 'safe zones'. These 'safe zones' were actually placed strategically among area of massive and regular student presence. The creation of these had limited the numbers of the Rogue Groups considerably.

In the last two months of intense fighting, more than half of the Mages initial number on both sides had been sent to Rehabilitation Centers because of their 'violent and aggressive nature as well as the danger they pose to their peers'. If the fighting didn't stop soon, all of them would be sent to Rehab. Those who were sent there were to be held in captivity until aggressions within the school ceased. The problem was no group would accept defeat.

Mitch sent a Sun Flare Charm. The charm was commonly used to light up large areas. In smaller areas, it had a blinding effect to those in its path. The Mages under Morris were blinded temporarily and started firing hexes wildly in panic. More often than not, those poorly aimed hexes hit their allies instead of their adversaries. So, for the next minute, the Senior Mages watched amusedly as their enemies hit each other. That was until the charm faded.

By that time, their numbers were more or less equal. A single loud pop reverberated through the hall and all of their opponents disappeared. It seemed they had gotten a group portkey for this particular mission. He signaled the retreat to his followers and they disappeared using their portkeys as well.

The Aurors, with their abysmal response time, arrived late as ever, approximately ten minutes after the battle's end even though the first report of loud spell-casting was reported forty minutes before their

arrival. They had ignored the initial reports chalking it up to over imaginative students but the sightings mounted to considerable levels which forced them to investigate.

The evidence that a fight had taken place in the area recently was overwhelming. Scorched marks on the walls, some loose bricks, a few blots of blood indicating the implementation of cutting hexes, the faint smell of potions in the air, and a dozen other things. It didn't exactly take a detective to figure that out. It was sad really, how the armed military force the Ministry had sent to a school to keep the peace was degraded to cleaning up the battles they were supposed to stop in the first place.

10:39 PM, Third Floor Corridor...

With all the fighting in Hogwarts, Harry and Slivenson had no time to go find out about the Stone's existence in the school much less a plot to steal it by one of their 'teachers' leaving only Katy to do so as she was relatively unbothered. And so Katy, Neville, Ron, and Hermione found themselves walking into the corridor which Dumbledore had explicitly said no to enter on pain of death.

However, they couldn't worry about that now. They had to stop Snape from stealing the Sorcerer's Stone and bringing back Voldemort to life. The plan would have been all fine and well had Harry and Hedwig not been waiting for them expectantly, much to the group's surprise.

"So Katy, care to tell me what you plan to achieve with this late night excursion of yours with Neville, Hermione, and Ronald." Harry asked, raising a brow inquisitively.

"We're trying to stop Snape from stealing the Stone!" Ron blurted out.

Harry looked at each of them. "Snape? He can't be. The last time I checked the Map, he was asleep in his room." Katy understood what the Map was. Everyone in the Marauders and their families did as each family had their own variation of it with the Marauder's Map excluded from the group.

"Well someone is still trying to get the Stone." Katy said.

“For what purpose might that serve, my dear sister?” Harry inquired.

“To revive Voldemort or turn lead into gold and become rich. I don’t know. Whatever the reason, it can’t be good.” Katy said with conviction.

“While I can’t fault you for trying to save the Stone of Flamel, did you bother trying to inform a professor?” Seeing their abashed faces, he muttered to himself. “Their Gryffindors after all. I shouldn’t have expected them to think of this rationally first.”

Katy looked surprised. “How do you of the Sorcerer’s Stone and Nicholas Flamel?”

Harry snorted. “How stupid do you think I am? You said and I quote ‘to revive Voldemort or turn lead into gold and become rich’. I can easily understand the revival part to mean creation of a new body for his soul to reside in taking into account of Dumbledore’s theory that Voldemort wasn’t human enough to die.

That and the turning lead into gold thing pretty much leaves you with the Sorcerer’s Stone. The only person who has ever created such a thing is Grand Alchemist Nicholas Flamel. Ergo, the Stone of Flamel conclusion is reached. It’s not exactly Quantum Physics trying to figure out what you’re talking about. So before we decide to charge into God knows what traps, let’s go find a teacher who actually has more experience with these things.”

It was a strange coincidence really that McGonagall and Flitwick came across them during their patrolling. “Mr. Potter, Ms. Potter, Ms. Granger, Mr. Weasley, Mr. Longbottom, I am very disappointed in you. Can you care to explain why you are wandering out and about past curfew?” McGonagall asked sternly.

“Certainly, Mam. You see we think someone is trying to steal the Sorcerer’s Stone.”

“How did you...never mind. The Stone is safe for now and-”

“Would you like to bet on that Mam?”

“What? Mr. Potter, detention for trying to indulge me into such behavior.”

“I’ll serve all the detentions you want if you come with us to check on the Stone. In fact, if we’re right and someone is down there trying to steal it as we speak, I want to be exempted from any Homework or projects for all of next year. If not, I’ll help grade your papers for a whole year.”

McGonagall looked somewhat amused at the...’proposition’. She knew full well he could just skip homework so she had nothing to lose. “Very well, Mr. Potter, I will oblige you with this challenge of yours. Come on Filius, a checkup on the Stone is in order.” So the group made their way to the room which held Fluffy, the not so fluffy Cerberus. A quick charm from Flitwick was all that was needed to keep it asleep.

The two professors sent similar Burning Hexes at the trapdoor before jumping in followed by their students. The Devil’s Snare was turned into ashes before they even hit the ground. The next room contained the thousands of flying keys. Surprisingly, the real key was not spelled to resist summoning charms as shown when Harry promptly cast one after the horrible show of Flying his professors showed.

The Troll was already unconscious and the Chess Set was easily flown over of. By now, the teachers were appalled as to how easy getting past the defenses had been. The Potions Test was the only one which proved remotely challenging had it not been for the fact that Hedwig could flash them across the barrier of flame without having to take a chance between drinking poison, wine, and two potions which could get them through the walls of flame in front and behind them.

By now, only Harry Flitwick and McGonagall continued while the rest were sent back to call the Headmaster back from his Wizengamot meeting to which Alex went to as well, representing the Potter Family due to his father’s inability at the time. Much to their surprise Quirrell was waiting for them.

“Minerva, Filius, Apprentice Potter, I was not expecting you to come.”

“I’m sure you weren’t” Harry said cheerfully while inconspicuously drawing his wand.

“Well, I can’t let you interfere with my Lord’s plans so EXPELLIARMUS!” He yelled, only to be surprised that a shield blocked his attempt. The Transfiguration and Charms Professor realized that they were up against a traitor and had therefore drawn their wands, slightly abashed that a first year had beaten them to it.

“Quintus, how could you betray us to you-know who. I thought you were to be trusted. Clearly we were mistaken in doing so.” Flitwick said, sending a Stunner at him while McGonagall sent a disarmers. Harry chose a favorable spot near the wall. He was going to enjoy this show.

Quirrell began sending some not so nice curses at them which were meant to kill, cause pain, harm grievously, basically any curse a Dark Lord like Voldemort would bother trying to learn. These were easily deflected or dodged by the two professors as they began using Exploding Hexes and Curses. Sadly, the duel soon lost its interest in Harry’s eyes as he chose to stun Quirrell in the back, ending the duel in an anticlimactic way.

He then proceeded to extract the Stone from the Mirror before instructing Hedwig to stash it safely in his dorm unless Dumbledore got some silly idea or what not to destroy it. No, he was going to enjoy his last few days at Hogwarts as Flamel tore apart Dumbledore. Besides, he wanted a chance to study the Stone a bit. The Professors were too busy to notice he had taken it.

“So Professor McGonagall, does this mean I won’t have to do homework for you next year?” Harry asked.

“Fine, fine. My fault really as I agreed to this stupid bet.” She muttered.

End of the Year Feast...

“...For sheer bravery in front of Evil and thwarting a dark wizard from taking the Sorcerer’s Stone, I am pleased to award Mr. Harry a Special Awards Service. Also, on behalf of the Ministry of Magic, he is to be presented with an Order of Merlin, Third Class...” Dumbledore continued this longwinded speech of his. Everyone was clearly starving.

Harry had already gotten these awards and his mother was crying about how her ‘little Harry had grown up’ while his father slapped him in the back for a job well done. Harry was now banging his head on the Slytherin Table hoping it would make Dumbledore stop talking and allow them to eat. Alex had been greatly amused by his brother’s annoyance to all this fame.

The only good thing about it was when Flamel decided to enter the Hall and proceeded to shout at Dumbledore for even allowing the Stone to be endangered. That was entirely before Harry gave him back his Stone for which he was thanked. All in all, it was a fairly good year. Now all he had to figure out was how to make Dumbledore stop talking and allow them to eat. And it was all because of that blasted stone.

Please Review.

Chapter 17: Beginning of Summer and Business

Summer Vacation. Those two words sparked happiness and joy for children all around the world; particularly so in the case of Hogwarts students after their hectic year. Harry Potter was among the happiest to be released from that recently dreaded institute of learning also referred to as 'The Deathtrap' by himself. Within a span of a year, he had done quite well being awarded a Bronze Cauldron with Theoretic Citation Award, an Order of Merlin 3rd Class (commonly called The Bronze Order of Merlin), and a Valor Award. The last one he had gotten in the end for God knows what reason. As long as the public liked him and the Ministry could give a reason to award it, it was done. Besides, he was practically celebrity now. The International Public loved him.

Aside from that, he got quite a bit of gold from the Flamels as well as a Right of Allegiance without generation limit from the Malfoys. Academically, he was a prodigal genius to some. He excelled in all subjects spectacularly. A copy of his grades for his overall academic performance is below:

Dear Mr. Potter

Congratulations on completing your first year at Hogwarts school of witchcraft and Wizardry. Below are the marks for your first term and the first year class rankings. The class rankings are done by averaging your marks. Note that an Outstanding is equal to six points, Exceeds Expectations five points, Acceptable four points, Poor three points, Dreadful one point, and Troll negative one point. All Grades with a plus (+) Mark indicates a Perfect Score though does not change the number of points received from an Outstanding. Only Theory and Practical are included in the tallying of points.

Minerva M. McGonagall

Deputy Headmistress

Subject – Grade (Theoretical – Practical – Overall) – Ranking

Defense Against the Dark Arts – O – O+ - O+ - 1st

Transfiguration- O+ – O+ - O+ - 1st

Charms – O – O+ - O+ - 2nd

Potions – O+ - O+ - O+ - 1st

Herbology – EE – EE – EE – 3rd

History of Magic – O+ - No Practical for Class – O+ - 1st

Astronomy – EE – O – EE – 2nd

Overall Ranking- 1st

Overall Grade- Outstanding

Top Ten First Years by Rank

1. Harold Potter, Apprentice – Outstanding +
2. Hermione Granger, Gryffindor – Outstanding +
3. Terry Boot, Ravenclaw – Outstanding
4. Su Li, Ravenclaw – Outstanding
5. Susan Bones, Hufflepuff – Exceeding Expectations
6. Hannah Abbot, Hufflepuff- Exceeding Expectations
7. Anthony Goldstein, Ravenclaw – Exceeding Expectations
8. Draco Malfoy, Slytherin – Exceeding Expectations
9. Katherine Potter, Gryffindor –Exceeding Expectations
10. Daphne Greengrass, Slytherin – Exceeding Expectations

Mr. Potter:

Congratulations. The Hogwarts Board of Governors are pleased to tell you that you have Special Citation in Defense Against the Dark Arts, Charms, Potions, and History of Magic.

Celia Jonson

Secretary of the Board of Governors

Added to that, he had shown affinity for Battle Magic in general as well as Offensive Transfiguration. He was known to be creative in using the simplest of household charms to decapitate or hinder his opponents in battle. Then, there was that tidbit about being trained in Specialized Fields such as Wards, Runes, Rituals, Elemental Magic, Occlumency and you had his first year in nutshell. Well, there was something about a highly sought out Artifact being rescued, fighting trolls, finding a secret location of the Founders and a civil war but that was insignificant.

Diagon Alley...

Harry looked around the familiar place. In all honesty, it was a huge shopping mall and a city rolled into one. Today there were a lot less people than usual. Leisurely, he ambled through the small crowds and cobblestone path until Gringotts appeared in his sight. He stood there for a moment, admiring the workmanship of the Goblins. The Building, though commonly thought to be built of Coral and Ivory, was actually made of Koralium

Koralium was a legendary metal known for its hardness and durability. It was the most commonly used metal of the Goblins because of their abundance in Goblin Mining Areas. Koralium is usually found in large deposits deep underground, estimated at about ten thousand feet deep. Because of its similarity in looks to Coral and being found under ground, it was named Koralium.

Harry casually walked to a nearby Teller Goblin. "Greetings Goblin, May Gold Flow into your Coffers." Harry said in perfect Gobbledygook.

The Goblin's look of surprise at being talked to in Gobbledygook by a human indicated that he was relatively new to the System. "May Gold flow through yours, Human."

Harry nodded politely at the response. "I am here to speak to Senior Goblin Chamlore about the handling of my Assets here."

The Goblin Teller nodded before shouting for some Goblin Runner to escort him to Senior Goblin Chamlore's office. Harry took note of the business of the other goblins. Business must be very good for them. They finally stopped in front of a regular oak door. The Goblin Runner showed him in. Harry smiled appreciatively at the Goblin before tipping him a Galleon. The Runner took the Golden Coin happily and promptly left.

"Harry, I understand you wished to speak to me about a number of things so please take a seat." The aged Goblin said.

Harry took a seat on one of the chairs, the formality between them gone after years of knowing each other. "So Chamlore, tell me, how is Goblin Griphook doing?" Harry asked, reverting to English.

"He is rather well. I believe he was recently promoted to a Manager for Handling smaller Fortunes." Chamlore was hardly surprised anymore at Harry's strange questions about Goblin Welfare.

"Good. So as I understand, the Peverell Holdings are neglected so to say because of the corrupt and inept humans taking care of it. I want them to stop handling my Assets and transfer all Monetary Handling including Investments to a Trustworthy Goblin."

Chamlore looked at him curiously. "That is an interesting thing you're asking us to do Harry. It's rare for Goblins to be personally appointed these days. So, who do you want?"

"What? No 'we have arranged profiles of the Goblins most suited for this task' or 'would you like to interview the candidates'?" Harry asked in mock outrage.

The Goblin snorted at his antics. "Please, you know most of the Goblin Handlers in this bank already. I'm sure you could give a name or two from that extensive memory of yours."

"Well, I was thinking Griphook could do it. After all, he seems vicious enough to deal with unsavory factors of the community." Harry said.

"I don't know. He is still new to this Handling System and might not be experienced enough to handle a relatively large Vault." Chamlore said uncertainly.

"Please, it isn't that hard to get it." Harry stated.

"This from the boy who nearly drove a Goblin crazy trying to teach him Arithmancy." He muttered.

"Can you blame me? I was Six when they tried to teach me. What do you expect?"

"So it's Griphook then for the Vault Managing?" He asked filling out some forms.

"Yep." Harry said, confirming.

"Fine, I will tell him this evening after the File Transfer is completed. Please sign here for approval of the Holding Transfer." Chamlore said, handing him a piece of Parchment. Harry dipped Quill into the Ink and scribbled his name complexly into the paper.

"By the way, try to get me a Recording of when you tell him. It will be hilarious."

"I will never understand how your mind works." Chamlore said, shaking his head.

Harry smirked at him before continuing. "Now, next up, I am starting up a Business."

"What kind?"

“A Delicatessen.”

“You want to start up a Restaurant slash Market for fancy dairy products and wine?” The Goblin asked inquisitively, raising a brow at the boy before him.

“Well, we need one in this blasted country. It’s pathetic how we can barely find a decent place to buy wine, butter, and cheese.” Harry said, slightly annoyed by that fact.

“And who’s going to run it?”

Harry’s smirk grew even wider. “Squibs who want to stay in the Magical world but can’t find a decent job.”

The Goblins mouth fell open in shock. After five minutes of this, Harry silently wondered if he finally broke him.

Breaking out of his stupor, Chamlore asked, “How big do you want the building?”

“It will take up about two standard Alley lots so 20 feet by 40 feet, single story. I have currently 20 Million Galleons give or take. The construction, furnishing, documentation, permits and warding should be about two million galleons. There should be about ten Squibs hired to make it efficient each being paid the standard one thousand Galleon Salary. The wine and such will be taken care of by buying from the Muggle World. The funny thing is that wine from the muggle world is far cheaper than that from anywhere in the wizarding world.”

“What makes you think that the business will succeed?”

“Easy, because the people won’t care where I got it all from. The food can easily be prepared by Specialized House Elves too. Most people can’t afford House Elves so they usually eat in restaurants or cook. Compared to Muggle cooking, ours is amateur. That’s why I’ll be supplying cookbooks from them to learn from. All in all, my expenses total at about Five Million.”

Chamlore sighed. “There’s no talking you out of this is there?”

“Nope.”

“Fine. I’ll have Griphook deal with the Permits and Contact a Magical Construction Crew. They’ll Finish in Two Months just in time for the Annual School Shopping here.”

“Good, good. That’s nice time for a Grand Opening. Right, I’ll be leaving now. I have to meet with my brother in the Leaky Cauldron in,” He looked at his expensive Rolex wristwatch to see the time, “ten minutes.”

“Give my greetings to your brother.”

“Will do, Chamlore.” Harry said, leaving the room. The Goblin sighed and got back to work. The Business was going to be a lot of work. “RUNNER!” A Goblin ran into the room hastily and stood in attention before his superior. “Fetch Griphook for me. It concerns his new position.” The Goblin saluted before quickly leaving to find said goblin.

The Leaky Cauldron...

Alex sat in the rather downgraded Restaurant waiting for his brother. He was late...again. This was one of their many trips to the Alley this summer, particularly because of the Reusable Portkeys they were given by the Ministry in honor of his efforts to stop their pathetic Defense Teacher. They had gotten quite a lot of freebies these past few days. Some of them were from Ministries Internationally, others from appreciative people.

He turned in time to see Harry rush through the door facing Diagon Alley. He was panting lightly when he reached him. “Sorry, I’m late.” Harry said.

“So why did you have to go to Gringots.” Alex inquired.

“Business.” Harry stated simply.

“Business?” Alex repeated curiously.

“Business.” His younger brother stated, reaffirming his previous statement.

“Right. Let’s go back home for lunch. I’m famished. What do you think Kippy cooked?”

“Marble Potatoes and Chicken with Rosemary and Gravy.” Harry said as they activated their portkeys. The familiar tugging sensation brought them in front of Potter Manor. “Or at least, that’s what Kippy said she’d cook.” Kippy was the Potter Family House Elf Cook, the one who taught Harry how to cook personally when he was younger.

“You always were the favorite of that elf.” Alex declared as they walked leisurely to the Manor. As they entered the door, Alex announced, “Mother, Father, we’re home.”

“Right dear, don’t forget to hang up your cloaks.” Was the reply of Lily. A swish of Alex’s wand was all that it took and their cloaks were neatly hanged. The Ministry would be hard pressed to catch them as they were in a highly magical community already. Not to mention the Gringots erected wards around their place of residence and it would be improbable to see who cast what magic. For all the Ministry knew, it was the house elf’s fault. “Alex, Harry, we’re visiting the Weasley’s place tomorrow. Don’t forget.”

“We won’t mother.” Harry replied, walking into the Kitchen with Alex behind him.

“Hey Kippy.” Alex greeted rather cheerfully.

“Master Harry, Master Alex, welcome back. What can Kippy be doing for you?” The Kitchen House Elf asked.

“We were just wondering when lunch would be served.” Harry said.

“Oh, Kippy will be serving lunch in five minutes, Sir. Would you be liking anything else?”

“I’ll have pineapple juice with mint. We’ll just wait in the Dining Room.” Harry said. Their mother, in all her muggleborn glory,

demanded that they treated the House Elves with respect, though she had no qualms about their servitude.

“So little brother, care to share what business you want to start exactly?”

“You’re never going to stop asking about that are you?”

“Probably not.”

“Fine. I talked to Chamlore, who sends you his greetings by the way, about starting up a Delicatessen.”

“A muggle idea incorporated into Wizarding Business. This should be fun to watch.” Alex said chuckling.

“Laugh if you will, but I believe in its potential.” Harry said. “How’s the research on the Stone by the way?”

“It’s very helpful. I think we might be able to reverse engineer it quite nicely. So what do you think on the new idea the Americans are proposing in the Magical Congress of American States?”

“You mean the New Free Trade Agreement? It’s an obvious scheme to encourage importation and exportation in the Americas. Could be beneficial but the risk of illegal Potions Distribution is increase by nearly Thirty Percent. The Cubans got them there.”

“True, but that can easily be stopped by implementing the Single Access Amendment.” Alex countered.

“Yeah, and discourage export while decreasing import, which completely defeats its original purpose. Plus, what’s to stop people from finding ways around it?”

“Good point.” Alex said thoughtfully. Food ‘magically’ appeared onto the table, similar as to what happened in Hogwarts. James walked into the dining room sniffing the delectable food.

"Hello Alex, Harry, good job with handling that Dark Wizard." He hadn't stopped about that for ages. Harry groaned at the mention of the Stone and Alex smirked at his brother's discomfort with the subject being brought up yet again by their father. "Did your mother tell you we were visiting the Weasley's tomorrow?"

"She did, father." Alex said.

"Good, good. Katy's so excited to meet the youngest Weasley. Say, I think she was your partner in the Minister's Christmas Ball, Harry."

"Yeah, I think so too." Alex said, grinning deviously.

"That's because she was my partner." Harry said, embarrassed at having to bring this up with his dad and his brother. Knowing them as well as he did, the embarrassment was starting. This was merely the calm before the storm.

"That's alright. It's just something about Potter's and redheads. It's in our blood as Potter Males to be naturally attracted to them. I should now." James said, turning to Alex, he asked. "So when do you think they'll hold the wedding.?" Harry visibly reddened at this.

"I'm not sure. Though Harry here," He said, ruffling said boy's hair, "has always been quite the Charmer. Shouldn't be long before they get together. After all, Potter and redheads." If looks could kill, Alex would have been dead by now.

It was now, unfortunately, that Sirius and Peter walked into the dining room arguing which Bertie Bott's Bean tasted best while Remus followed them, clearly amused by their disagreement. They came to the Manor every so often to eat with them. Peter had changed drastically ever since the attack on the Potters. He grew to become more confident in himself as he broke the Imperious and was able to warn the Order of the fraud who took his place. He became a bloody hero of the light for that.

Sirius never actually settled down with a girl, and it was not uncommon to find a different girl in his house after every night. He made a reputation as an Elite Auror in the War and retired as soon as

news of Voldemort's defeat was announced. He lived off of the Black Inheritance quite well. Sirius Black, multimillionaire, party hound, womanizer.

Remus was one of the few reformed werewolves in the country. Because of his efforts in the War trying to sway the favor of the Werewolves, the Ministry funded him for a lifetime supply of Wolfsbane. He was a well liked man, becoming one of the finest hunters in the country.

"Hey Prongs, squirts." Sirius greeted, referring to the two Male Potter Children. "Prongs tell Wormtail here that the Chocolate Bean taste much better than the Smore Bean."

"Well Padfoot, a Smore has chocolate in it with marshmallows and you can't beat that know can you?"

"HA!" Peter yelled in triumph.

"Prongs, how could you? My own blood brother, betraying me to that rat." He said melodramatically, pointing a finger at Peter.

"Padfoot, he is a rat." James stated humorously.

Sirius glared at him. "Who's side are you on anyway?"

"Neutral."

"So Prongs what are you talking about with the boys here?" Sirius said, changing the subject.

"Ginny Weasley." Alex stated, mirth clearly in his eyes.

"Who?" Padfoot asked, filling up his plate with food.

"Red hair, Light Family, six brothers, Harry's dance partner?" James said, hoping his choice of random terms would give his best friend a clue.

A look of recognition passed through his face before he turned to look at Harry. "Can't blame you there mate. Potters and redheads I tell you. Potter and redheads." The dog animagus said sympathetically, being a staunch believer that the Potter's were cursed to fall in love with redheads and the horrible temper that was usually accompanied them.

Harry shot another glare at his older brother from bringing the matter up yet again. Before the matter could be brought up again, Lily and Katy came in. Harry had never been so happy seeing them enter a room he was in.

"Alex, how was your trip to Diagon Alley?" Lily asked.

"It was fine." He replied.

"So Lily, how's the Department of Mysteries know a days?" Remus asked. Lily was a Researcher for the secretive Department, working to unravel ancient languages to help them in development of spells.

"Can't tell you. Top secret information and all that." She answered.

"Give it up Moony, we haven't gotten anything from her in years." James said.

"One of these days..." Remus muttered.

And so the beginning of summer came. Let the fun begin.

Chapter 18: The Burrow and Beginnings

It was strange for Harry to visit the Weasleys for two reasons. One, he had never visited another person for leisure before. Two, he barely had any relationship to the Weasleys ,except Percy, and that was on a professional level. Ron and the Twins were friendly acquaintances at best.

And so, it was with some hesitation that he side apparated with his family in front of the Weasley's House. The surroundings of the crooked structure was beautiful. If he remembered his geography correctly, they were in Devon, two kilometers West of Otter River. The muggle town of Ottery St. Catchpole was around five kilometers north with a hill hiding them from plain sight.

He turned his attention back to the building called "The Burrow". It was at least seven stories tall with numerous add-ons visible. The building was structurally unsound and had to be using Strengthening or Support Wards to keep the house from collapsing. The insides of the Burrow had a rather homey feeling to it. In terms of material things, the place had much to desire, though what it lacked in furniture, it made up for by the clear sense of Family Unity and happiness which was both welcoming and relaxing to others.

A wave of greetings met the Potters as they entered the house. It seemed that Bill Weasley, the eldest and therefore Scion of House Weasley, had taken a day off from Gringotts today, raising the Family's happiness. He was an expert Curse Breaker, especially so in Egyptian Curse Breaking. He was also a Warder, currently one of the best, or so Harry had heard from his Goblin Friends in the bank.

He might consider asking for him to ward his new 'business project'. After all, he needed to make sure it was well protected. Squibs could hardly defend the place unless they used Muggle Shotguns or something. That or the House Elf Magic. Those floppy eared creatures were downright vicious when they wanted to be. But better to be safe than sorry as the saying goes. Charlie Weasley was here as well. Harry knew little about him except for the fact that he was under the employment of a Dragon Reserve as a keeper.

“Lily, James, how nice to see you again!” Molly exclaimed, hugging them with her patented ‘I-can’t-breathe’ hug which made Harry wonder how his parents had not fainted from lack of oxygen. “Children, why don’t you take Harry and Katy here for a game of Quidditch? And boys, remember to take Ginny with you. You know how she loves watching your games.” Enthusiastic agreement came from the Weasley’s excluding Percy, opting to talk with Alex instead.

The twins, Ron, Ginny, Bill, and Charlie dragged away Harry and Katy to the pitch through the orchards after making a quick stop at the broom shed to get the brooms. The Weasley’s had fairly good brooms, most of these being Comet 360’s or the Blazing Comet Edition, the better brooms being sold by the Comet Corporation though was far out-leagued by the Nimbus 2000 of the Nimbus Limited.

The new Blazing Comets, though slower than the Nimbus 2001, traded its speed for superior acceleration and grip, making it ideal for dives. The Nimbus, however, was still widely considered as the latest in Aerial Magical Development.

Harry had a good broom, so to speak, just an unused one as he had seen no point in practicing flying as of yet. He was still putting the finishing touches to his Central Occlumency Shield and practicing Precision and Prediction of movement instead of Mass and Speed Casting. After all, it was better to cast a single well aimed stunner than a dozen stray Bludgeoning Hexes.

“So Harry, I hear you played as Chaser for the Slytherins this year.” Bill said.

“Yeah, I did. Though I only played for them once. By the time the second match came around, I was already moving into the Hufflepuff Dorms and Dumbledore decided I could only play for whichever house I resided in. Now that I’m in the Apprentice Dorms, I can’t play anymore apparently, unless I get his approval again.”

“There are seven of us who are going to play so how do we divide the teams?” Ron asked.

“Seven? There are eight of us here.” Harry stated.

“Yeah, but Ginny doesn’t play Quidditch.” Ron said. Ginny narrowed her eyes and glared at her brother. She was obviously angry at him for not allowing her to play.

“Well, why can’t she play? She does, after all, live with the five Quidditch Playing brothers. Come on just let her play with us. She can even be on our team and you can have Charlie.” Harry argued, trying to convince the Male Weasleys excluding Bill to let her play. She seemed surprised someone would go up against her against her older brothers for her.

“Alright fine, she can play, but she’s on your team. You guys are going to get slaughtered.” And so they were divided into two groups with Katy, Harry, Ginny, and Bill on one team and Ron, the twins, and Charlie on another. Katy and Ron were both chosen as Keepers of their teams while the rest were Chasers.

The Quaffle was thrown into the air magically by a strong banishing hex courtesy of Charlie before the Six Chasers went after it. Charlie got to it first, using his years of Seeker practice to catch it masterfully before doing performing a small loop to dodge Bill from taking the Quaffle.

Unfortunately, before he could even shoot it through a hoop, Harry kicked the ball out of his hand straight into the waiting arms of Ginny. The twins and the Resident Dragon Keeper tried desperately to stop her and Bill from scoring a goal which they succeeded in doing so...in a way. At the last moment before Ginny could score, she passed the ball to Harry, who threw the ball past the left hoop.

And so the match continued in a similar fashion. Ginny and Harry continuously scored goals because of their opposition greatly underestimated Ginny and her skills in flying. An hour later, a defeated Ron, Fred, George, and Charlie walked through the doors of the burrow with Ginny triumphantly bragging of her victory. The final score ended in 320 to 260 in favor of Ginny. But aside from the feeling of defeat, there was also the astonishment that accompanied

it. They were astonished by their sister's skill in the game. It was completely unexpected.

Of course as part of the usual Weasley Quidditch Game the winner had bragging rights over the defeated. Out of the corner of his eye, Harry could see Ginerva rubbing her hands in glee with a diabolical look plastered onto her face. It seemed she was going to milk this victory for all it was worth starting right now. With one last glance at her, a single thought came to Harry's mind. This should be fun to watch.

A good distance from the Burrow...

The agent stood still on top of the tallest tree he could find, dressed in muggle camouflage clothing, observing the child through his muggle binoculars. The Council Lord had ordered them to find out about him and the Elites had never failed in information gathering before. They were a select group of highly trained individuals working directly for the Lord. In a case where there was no lord, as shown right now, they were to answer before the decision of the Council Lord, the Magus Supreme, the Master Advisor, or the High Inquisitor.

Currently, the Magus Supreme and the High Inquisitor were dead or incapacitated with no Lord to decide who should replace them. The remaining two positions were filled by the Council Lord. The man was rather ecstatic at hearing news of an Heir. He was too old to continue running the government and with no probable successor, it would be chaos for their lands.

The agent observed the boy, Harry Potter, very closely. He was an excellent flyer and from their sources, he was a Water Elemental; a Wind Elemental too by the looks of how well he was flying. The boy was also very aware of anything and everything deemed important or relevant. That would make sure he could not be fooled or manipulated like some of their weaker Lords.

He was very calm and wise for his age too. Highly advanced and becoming more adept in certain branches quickly. Then, there was

that meeting with the goblins. They were extremely casual when dealing with him, perhaps to the point where they might be considered friends. If that were true, the ministry would be under his influence, to an extent, as well. He would make a good lord. Perhaps one of the greatest they had had in centuries.

The agent withdrew a portkey disguised as a disk from his robe and tapped it twice before it whisked him away to more familiar terrain. Montfortal. The jewel and pride of the Kingdom of Ionos. He thought, standing there and admiring the majestic form of the castle. It was built on the mountain at the edge of the island. Around the castle, you could see a bustling city brimming with activity while Dragon Elites kept an eye out for disruptive elements of the community.

The man made his way to the chamber of the Council Lord, barely glancing at the Castle Guards as he went. They all knew of his status as an Elite by the insignia of a red dragon on their chest. He stopped walking as he reached the doors to his destination, pausing slightly to nod at the guard. They opened the doors and he strode in solemnly. A loud banging was heard as the doors behind him were closed.

"Anything new?" A man asked, hardly looking up from his papers.

"We are nearing Confirmation of his status sir." The agent said curtly.

"Excellent work Agent Faren. Keep a watch over him at all times possible but do not under any circumstances reveal our existence to the boy. Understood?" The man was looking at Faren intensely now.

"Yes, Lord Rigan." The man replied.

"Good. Be sure that 'he' doesn't hear of it."

"Not a whisper shall reach his ears sir." The man bowed to Rigan again before leaving the Council Lord alone in his Chamber. Rigan turned his attention back to the papers in front of him. He shuffled through the pile of parchment until coming upon the one at the very bottom of the pile. At the top of the parchment, the words "OPERATION: RECLAMATION" was written.

He skimmed through the document before him, trying to decide whether to approve it or not. Finally, he came to a decision. He took a Quill and signed the parchment. He pulled open a drawer and snatched the letter in it before calling a guard in. "Sir?" The Guard asked, wondering why he had been summoned.

"Take these to Commander Sinther and make haste. Do not let anyone else but him read it. No one may intercept. Protect it with your life." The Guard's eyes widened, understanding the importance of the letter.

"Yes Council Lord. I shall not fail. He hurriedly hid the two documents within his armor before running to the Military Headquarters. Rigan sighed and looked at the retreating figure of the guard. I hope that I have done the right thing.

"...Operation: Reclamation to this day is still celebrated as the first step for Ionos to become the World Power it is today..."

"...Initiation began on July 31st though further reports and statements say that the Operation was authorized a week or two before mobilization began..."

"Within moments after the first step of the Operation was completed, the resistance crumbled swiftly after they saw how quickly Ionos forces destroyed fortifications and overrun positions..."

"...is still considered as the Finest Executed Plan in Wizard history..."

"...the beginning of the Civil War..."

-excerpts from: How it all began: The Rise of Ionos, Chapter II: Operation Reclamation, by Geoffrey Theodore Krasper, 1st edition

Please R and R

Chapter 19: The Spark of War

Island of Eris, Ionos' Capital City of Zyder...

A uniformed man stood within the observatory room, inspecting the training of the newest batch of Dragon Elite Trainees. The training of the next generation of Agents was an important task. They were the Guardians of the islands and the sole remaining semi-military force left intact. The Army had been disbanded almost immediately after the demise of the last lord and the act of doing so greatly weakened them, making it harder to keep the peace while defending against other states or factions.

Around him were several of the most Senior Agents remaining. They gave their personal opinions on certain trainees and as a leader of his group, he had to acknowledge those comments and how much weight it held. But things would never be the same unless their lord was restored to the Royal Throne. Without the army or even the militia to compare to, they weren't considered as special and were hardly treated with respect. Many of their best Agents were put on suspension for killing people who had pushed them to the limit.

Suddenly, two Agents and what appeared to be a Palace Guard entered the room. An agent was either in front or behind the man, presumably with a message. Security around him had become tighter ever since the assassination of the three Senior Agents while during an investigation by mercenaries.

"Sir." The two agents saluted.

"At ease. What is it?" He asked.

"Sir, this man has a message for from the Council Lord, sir." The other agent replied.

Nodding, he said, "Very well, you may leave." He turned to address the senior agents. "We'll continue this later. Clear out." Each of them saluted in turn before leaving. Finally the room was empty except for him and the man. "What's your message?"

“Commander Sinther, I was sent here to give you these.” The messenger said, handing over the two documents.

“What are these?” Sinther asked, scanning through them.

“The first is for the start of the initiation of,” he looked around nervously before whispering, “Operation: Reclamation. The second is a letter which explains why it is to be done so and what additional steps are to be taken first. Both of these are classed Alpha Secrecy. No one aside from you and the Council Lord can know of the specific contents of it. I am to be wiped of any specifics told to me once I return to the chambers of the Council Lord. Good day, Commander Sinther.” He bowed before making his way out.

Interesting. Operation Reclamation was only described to me in vague detail by Clark before he was killed by those blasted mercenaries. The Council Lord has never once mentioned knowing about it. And if it's being held under this much secrecy, it must be a Shock Operation designed to spearhead its way through political forces or otherwise.

He looked at the documents and noted that the Lord of Ionos' seal was on both papers. Very interesting indeed.

1 mile West in Carvelt Village, near Enniskillen, Ireland...

Augustus Rookwood lay silently within the terrain, careful not to be seen by any wandering villagers. Around him, freed Death Eaters were lying in wait for his signal to attack. There were now four hundred of them under his command in Northern Ireland. To their west lay the Border Village, the farthest and most isolated wizarding settlement with an Auror force they could find. The Aurors' presence was due to their recent raids in the area and reports of kidnapping.

Their chain of attack was designed deliberately so that Ministry analysts would find out of the next attack and rush men into the area. Little did they know that their precious Auror force was outnumbered nearly two to one. Today would be the beginning of the end. The

Dark Lord might have fallen but his cause still lives on within his followers.

With a quick wave of his wand, a green erupted from his wand. As one, the mass of Death Eaters with him surged forward, hiding no longer. Instantly, anti-apparation wards activated, stopping anyone from escaping. There was a hundred Death Eaters in his attack force. He would charge in create as much havoc as possible before falling back and drawing the Auror force towards the trap.

Carvelt Village, Ireland, Auror Graham's POV...

I sense something wrong. The Ministry said they were sending us additional support. But something's not right. A Death Eater and a strategist like Augustus Rookwood would not be so stupid as to go into a trap. No, the analysts had a hard time to crack the patterns of attack but it wasn't made too hard...this is a trap.

I glance around sharply, noticing that my squad seemed a bit fearful about fighting Death Eaters. I see a patrolling militia group turning around the corner. "Kyla, I'm going to talk to the militias first. Stay here and take charge while I'm gone will you?" Kyla merely nodded back at me as if to say go ahead. She was the next most senior Auror in my group. She graduated shortly after me in the Auror Academy. Fortunately, she never had to fight in the First War like I had to.

The militias were always glad to see an Auror approach them. It meant more protection and more help. I was nearing them when the ground suddenly shook. My instincts took over and I crouched down with a hand to the floor for support while my other hand withdrew my wand from my cloak.

The Militias had no such instincts but were quite amazed by how fast I had done it. It was this moment of awe that cost them their lives. I could see a spell heading for the ground and I immediately rolled away. I stand back up in mid roll and turn around to see the militia group burn to death. A scream forced me to look around. My squad was being attacked. Only Kyla and three others were left standing. One was killed by a Fire Bolt Curse while two others were incapacitated by the intense fire.

A Killing Curse whizzed past me and hit one of my Aurors, taking his life instantly. I whip my head around and blast a Death Eater into the air. Damn it! This was a trap. I raised a shield to block the barrage of oncoming curses. I sigh in relief as it holds...just barely at that. I quickly dropped my shield and ran for the nearest building, dodging curses as I did so.

Yes three meters to go until I reach the...BAM! What the...? I fall to the ground, slightly dazed from the impact of the Hex. I can see the Death Eater getting ready to cast another spell. I try to move out of the way, unfortunately, I have been temporarily immobilized. The tip of his wand began glowing green and was about to release a curse when he was stunned unconscious. The Aurors from the other side of town were coming.

We were pushing them back.

Normal POV, Death Eaters...

Augustus Rookwood dodged another stunner as Death Eaters around him began falling before the Aurors. Activating a Sonorous Charm, he yelled, "FALL BACK! RETREAT." Although they were technically being defeated, that didn't mean they had to retreat just yet. This was all part of the plan. Hopefully, the Aurors were stupid. He portkeyed out of the area as the rest of the remaining Death Eaters fell back in disarray. Step One Completed. Proceed to Step Two.

As the Aurors began to chase down the Death Eaters, a second group of a hundred Death Eaters attacked the town from the East while a third Death Eater group of two hundred lay waiting in ambush. The trap was set, the bait being chased. The events following soon after would be described in many colorful adjectives.

Slaughter. One-sided Massacre. Mass Killings. Genocide. Merciless. Cruel. Heinous. Disgusting. Fear Inspiring. Gruesome. Monstrous.

Evil. Pure Genius.

Auror Graham's POV

Things had been going well for us so far. The Death Eaters were wearing down and it was only a matter of time before they were caught. I send out another stunner, taking down another Death Eater. The anti-apparation wards they erected was turning this place into a death trap for them.

I suddenly stop seeing the Death Eaters disappear in the mist. Something's not right. This was all a scheme. "AMBUSH!" I yell, alerting the other Aurors. Good thing I did too or else most of them would have been blown to bits by incoming Explosion Hexes. We're blind in this mist. Screams and moaning sounds could be heard from our sides. They were taking us out one by one. I turned my head in time to see another killing curse pass by me.

That was close. I send a stunner randomly before pooling all my magic. As Moody used to say, if there isn't an escape alternative, make one for yourself. With immense concentration I begin to destroy the wards with the little ward breaking experience I had accumulated over the years.

The Wards weren't that well made it seemed due to the number of holes in them. I chose a particularly small hole and began to use an imaginary hammer to smash at the wards. It began to crack ever so slightly and with each recessive hit, the crack grew bigger and deeper. Finally, with one great blast, I manage to break the wards.

I feel the wards fading and I immediately apparate out, feeling immensely lucky I had not died. The familiar walls of St. Mungoes Apparation Center greet me as I collapse onto the floor, surrendering to the darkness.

Aurors...

They had noticed the attempts of one of their coworkers as he began an odd series of patterns to destroy the wards. This was it for them they knew but a chance for escape was just too tempting to resist. So in a final desperate attempt to escape death, they began conjuring walls and shields, summoning barriers, creating shields...anything

and everything they could do in their power to buy enough time for the Ward Breaker to finish his work.

Suddenly, Graham, as a well known Senior at that time, broke through the wards and disappeared with a resounding crack. People soon followed, apparating anywhere away from the site in varying distances. It was official. The Northern Irish Auror Battalions had been scattered and beaten by the Death Eaters. Hours later, reports from civilian survivors who escaped from the civilian survivors would fill the press about what had happened within the town. Their tales of recruitment and colonization. Of torture and killings. Of pillaging and abuse.

Attacks against other towns nearby were similarly successful with the Militias being crushed nearly every time. Civil Guards were rushed to form a defensive line over the remaining towns still free from Death Eaters in an attempt to stop the advance that was to follow in the weeks and to hopefully launch a counterattack to drive them out.

Chaos would ensue as the fear of war which had not gripped the British magical populous had not felt for in years would come into being. Sides would clash in battle as tensions grew high. The Magical State Wars start with the event most commonly known as the Massacre of the Border.

“Out of the original two hundred men sent to the defense of Carvelt Village, only ninety one men got out alive. Official Reports say that there have been about three hundred Civilian Militias and Civilians who were able to escape though the prestigious Order of the Phoenix claim that there were over two thousand escapees from the village of ten thousand...”

“...As soon as the Massacre of the Border Village had ended, the Fudge Administration backed by Albus Dumbledore and the Wizengamot as well as several prominent families declared a full out containment of the area and to stop any further developments to the insurrection. Though many have claimed that others in this group tried but failed to pressure the Minister to take more drastic measures then simple containment procedures...”

“...Similarly while the North Irish Death Eaters were attacking led by Augustus Rookwood, several other prominent death eaters raised followers of their own and sparked a civil war for the second time in a decade. Though a new approach of capturing territories was used by these rebels, they eventually lost their momentum in the war and never regaining it until the return of their Lord Voldemort in 2005...”

-excerpts from: The Greatest War of the 21st Century by Robert Jivel, Chapter IV: The Sounds of War Approach, International Best Seller

Chapter 20: Continuing the Business and the Monacan Casino

Harry's Mind...

The sand plains which had long covered these areas had been replaced by gentle sloping meadows of grass, newly grown. In the midst of the plants lay a single castle carved out of Mithril. Its walls and towers were strong and sturdy ensuring that any invaders would be hard pressed to breach the place. Stone figurines stood defiantly upon the battlements, ready to fight to the last for the place.

A single tower loomed over the entire area at the center. Inside of it were the most precious memories a person could have, their childhood. Mounted upon the tower was a single large mirror capable of reflecting enough light to burn a person.

Harry and his mentor sat upon the cliff admiring the defenses. "Well done, well done. Let's see how long you'll last this time." Myer said. With a wave of his hand, a shadow emerged out of the sand and charged at the fort. Blazing arrows lit alight and fired by the stone figurines passed through it uselessly while the center tower tried to banish the shadow with light the shadow.

The shadow began to gain speed before climbing up the walls at the blink of the eye. Suddenly it morphed into a huge Minotaur and hacked away at the Stone guards with its huge Cleaving Axe furiously. It made quick work of the guards.

The shadow changed form again and turned into a dragon. A blast of dark fire blasted away the center tower easily. Changed into its original form and encountered no resistance in entering the tower once again, masterfully locating the Memory pool signifying the end of the Occlumency exercise.

"One minute and five seconds, longest time you've held out." Myer said.

"No fair, how am I supposed to beat that blasted shadow morphing thing?" Harry asked, annoyed that his efforts had failed...again.

“You will figure it out in time. But do not worry for only a few Master Legillimenses know of the technique. Meanwhile, the best you can hope to do is to delay it. Begin reinforcing your Core Defense and start laying ground for the next layer. Be... creative with your defenses. We will meet again in three weeks time to see if you have any later developments.” The place blurred into nothingness and Harry broke out of his meditative state.

He stood up from the floor he usually sat upon to enter his meditative stance, the book beside him. He practiced his Occlumency Shields everyday in the morning. He carefully placed the book in his trunk. He checked his wristwatch only to find out it was barely 5:00 AM. He headed out to the kitchen to cook his breakfast as he had done so for years. It was so natural to him.

He skillfully poached the eggs and toasted some bread before placing tea bags into the cups filled with hot water. He sat down and slathered the jam onto his piece of toast when, as if on cue, Alex came in wearing his finest formal robes. “Morning Alex. What’s with the robes?” Harry asked curiously, reaching for his copy of the Daily Prophet folded on the dining table, preordered and accepted by the House Elves of the mansion.

“Morning to you too Harry. And the reason I am wearing these robes is because of my attendance in the Goblin-Monacan held Casino, the Golden Fortune. I am to play in the exclusive and premiere Royale Sands Chamber. Alchemist Flamel will be meeting me there.”

“And your excuse to mother and father for this is what?” Harry asked, skimming lightly through the Daily Prophet.

“No secrets. Father knows perfectly of what I’m doing. He has no objections and claims it is training in social engagements. Mother was indifferent and Katy didn’t even know there were Goblin run casinos.” Alex said, biting a piece of his poached egg.

“As expected, I suppose. She’s not yet that aware, at least not to our level.”

“So anything new in the Prophet?” Alex asked, checking his pocket watch for the time. Normally, he’d bring his wristwatch, but occasions like these were very old fashioned. A Tempus Charm to reveal the time was considered as something for the commoners as they called the poor and middle class. High class and arrogant, the exact kind of people Heirs were taught to deal with.

“Death Eaters are moving against the Northern Irish Defensive Force. Pushed back the Aurors a fair distance too. They have captured three towns to date, another two are on the brink of capture and about a dozen are under heavy siege. All magical areas in Northern Ireland are under attack in one form or another. So far, the Ministry has begun rushing in Reinforcements and enacted Rescue Operations.

Two hundred Civilians dead from the latest count, most being Militias or Civil Guards. Number of Death Eaters still unknown. And it seems highly probable Dumbledore’s going to reform the mythical Order of the Phoenix, from what I gathered between Father and his friends’ whispered conversations. Thank God for the Weasley twins Extendable Ears. I knew they’d be useful eventually. And how are you going to go to Monaco by the way?”

“I’ll be going via international portkey courtesy of the Goblins and the Ministry. Besides, when did you do business with the twins?” Alex asked.

“Once or twice during the beginning of the school year. It cost me a fair bit of gold to make sure that I got the latest of their working prototypes.” Harry said.

“That could be useful in the future.” Alex noted, sipping his tea. “Well, I better get to the Golden Fortune. It wouldn’t do to be late.” With that, Alex walked out to the boundary of the wards before disappearing with a flash, a clear signification of the portkey’s activation.

Harry finished his breakfast and read the relatively important Prophet articles before calling Hedwig to flash him to Diagon Alley. This was going to be a busy day with many headaches, trying to finalize the last part of the new business. Harry just hoped Chamlore had the Pain Kit ready.

The Golden Fortune, Principality of Monaco, France...

The magical city was very much different from its muggle city-state counterpart. The Franco-Monegasque Treaty of 1861 between its muggle counterparts never happened in the magical community. Instead, Monaco was changed into Gringotts main Headquarters in Europe instead of the traditional Capital city. With massive Goblin presence came some side-effects. The Goblins became extremely powerful in the area sort of like the HSBC in Hong Kong when it was still under British rule.

So, Gringotts used this apparent influence and power to the best of their advantage. They opened up businesses, more often than not, casinos and other gambling facilities, Metal Crafter Workshops and the likes; Goblin Culture and traditions at its finest with a twist of contemporary technique, used for profit and other more special things...to the Goblins of course. In a way, the city of Monaco had been dominated by the Goblins. So it was with no surprise that prejudice against Goblins in France was slightly less compared to the rest of the world with few exceptions.

Alex reappeared in the Golden Fortune's exclusive Portkey Zone, the only place in the very large casino one could get in via Portkey. And the only way to get those special kind of portkeys was by Intentional Creation of a Elder Goblin Crafter with direct approval from the Council of the Seven Clan Masters. A Goblin nonchalantly led him through a maze of table filled with Wizards and witches obviously trying their luck against the Dealer Goblin, obviously with little luck. Still, every once in a while, people won against them, attracting more people to come and seek their fortune behind the marble walls of the Golden Fortune.

It was a vicious circle, completely and totally controlled by the Goblins to the best of their capabilities. Devious. Absolutely devious.

After navigating their way through what seemed to be an endless amount of tables with all manner of Wizarding and Muggle games being played on it, Alex finally reached the ornate Mithril Doors which

made sure nothing could get in or out without Goblin approval. Inside were about a hundred other people with a few Goblins or so.

He sat at the Table named Quicksilver and showed his tokens, exchanged metal chips impervious to any magic as representation for large amounts of gold, or so they were told. Each of these tokens were worth roughly ten thousand galleons. They could be divided using the wand to become more tokens of lesser value, all added up to be equal to the token divided. Alex had about a hundred of these tokens with him at the moments.

There were five other players with him. First was the Dealer Goblin himself, who played for the casino, next was Lord Maurice Orjevon, a lesser member of the Compteguid, the French version of the Wizengamot, following him was Lord Mathias Zaltan, also a lesser member of the Wizengamot. Then there was Ferdinand Roentshmidt, a German muggleborn who monopolized the industry of Wand Material Distribution and Harvesting in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic.

And last but not the least was Goblin Senior Zartog from Italy. Zartog was the most successful Goblin Entrepreneur in the World. He made an independent business from Gringotts that specialized in collecting and finding Artifacts and Ancient Magical Locations and Secrets. He became extremely wealthy with his expeditions and was awarded the title Honorary Senior by Gringotts International.

“Welcome Scion Potter to the Quicksilver Table. The game is Poker Straight, one pot only.” The vague details served only to tell what game and variation of said game was being played. No rules, no directions, no guide. You either figure it out yourself or lose all your money. It was a good thing most of everyone in the room had researched on the game beforehand.

The Dealer dealt out five cards to each of them in succession, all cards were faced down. Alex picked up his set and scanned through them passively, thinking of the best possible ranking it could yield. Suddenly a wide grin spread across his face, one that bothered the other players causing them to fold their bets in the next betting sequence after Alex went all in. The Goblin Dealer pushed the tokens

in the center towards him and started to deal out the next round of cards. It's always fun to mess with their minds. Good thing I read about those muggle books involving Psychological Warfare and Poker.

Chamlore's Office, Gringotts: London Branch, England...

Harry took a sip of Butterbeer as he listened to the very shortened and simplified version of what had happened and what went wrong with the whole business operation. "...The Ministry was apparently scared we'd turn London into the next Monaco and denied us a Permit because no client name was attached. It looks like you'll have to blow your cover to start up the Deli."

Harry frowned. "I was hoping not to be revealed as of yet since Slivenson's powerbase in the Ministry is big enough to stop this."

"There is a way that we could keep this from reaching his ear. We could...bribe them." The Goblin said.

"That might work but popularity, coercion or fame could make those people talk. And Veritaserum could always be used."

"The Obviarum Counter Potion can easily be used to counter Veritaserum. And the Aurors would be none the wiser. Everything else has been taken care of except the Construction Permit. Everything's good to go and set up. The supplier, the store, the constructors the materials, the goods, as soon as the building is done, we can get it started." Chamlore argued convincingly. Gringotts had been promised a good share of profit if this pushed through and the Goblin in charge in England told him to do anything he could to make sure they got paid.

"Fine, do it. Give the constructors the deadline and promises of a big bonus if they complete before our six week deadline. That would leave us one week to get the place stocked up and ready." Harry said.

"Tell me this Harry, why must you insist on having its Grand Opening One week before the school starts?"

“Because the benefits of that would be far greater and the profit returns would be far bigger. During that week, most of the children will be doing their shopping and make it better known in a less amount of time.” A single add on that day would alert even more people about it and they’d be sure to be curious as this has never been seen before by most people. Plus, the muggleborns and half-bloods will appreciate a wizarding establishment that adapted a muggle idea.”

Quicksilver Table, Royale Sands

Thirty seven rounds of Poker later found Alex six hundred and two thousand galleons poorer. By now, only Alex, the Dealer, Zartog, and Roentshcmidt were left. Zartog looked at his cards with a feral grin. The Human was going to get thrown out of this game. He was going to win this. The other two had folded long ago and it was only between the two now.

“Tell you what Goblin, I’m willing to bet you the Battle Manuscripts of the Potters in exchange for a certain object.”

“Ha...are you so willing to lose your family’s heirlooms boy. But very well, I’ll hear your request.” Alex leaned over to whisper in the Goblin’s ear. Zartog’s eyes widened at hearing his near silent request.

“You know of the object? Hmm...the trade is of equal value I suppose. Very well then. Let’s. Continue.”

“Prepare to lose human. Straight Flush.” Zartog said triumphantly.

Alex merely smiled at the overconfident Goblin and placed five cards on the table. A King, a Queen, a Jack, and a ten of spades. With each card he showed, the Goblin’s eyes widened further, holding his breath, hoping that the last card would not be an Ace of Spades. Unfortunately, luck was not on his side. An Ace of Spades. A Royal Straight Flush.

Zartog slumped back down in defeat. “I win Goblin. As per our agreement Zartog, owl me the object. Good day, Sir Roentshcmidt, Senior Zartog.” Alex bowed slightly before leaving the table. Zartog

stared at his retreating back. Hahaha...Crafty human. If it weren't for your looks I'd say you were a goblin. I always keep my end of the bargain human. Always. I guess it really is my fault for letting my guard down against them.

Alex smiled to himself. He had succeeded in this task Flamel had set out before him despite the odds. Now, his training began. Hopefully the tome would be useful.

Flashback, One week earlier...

Alexei Victor Potter,

As you have studied some basic forms of Alchemy and just recently, my own personal creation, the Philosopher's Stone, you have sought me out to teach you. Unfortunately, not everything about Alchemy cannot be taught. It must be understood. And to do that most effectively, you must learn by yourself, helped only when needed. This is the reason why there are few Master Alchemists in the world.

To help you in this task, thereby fully redeeming my family's debt to your brother and by extension, you, I have decided to guide you its arts. The first step is to acquire a certain tome from the Goblin named Zartog. I will meet you in Monaco next week. If you cannot get the book by then or assure solidly that it has been promised to you, I'm afraid you may never be a true alchemists.

Good Luck and God Speed.

Nicholas Flamel

End Flashback

"...To this day, Alexei Victor Potter stands as a legend amongst wizard kind everywhere. He was the brother of Harold James Potter, King of Ionos, and Master of Azkaban himself, all the while guiding his siblings and by extension their friends, and brought up the finest wizards of his generation. From him and his extended students came the best developments of his time and for years to come, they made Great Britain the most powerful country in the world magically,

making it once again relive its glory days...”

-excerpt from: Modern Pioneers of the Wizarding World, Chapter III
by Andrew Davison, awarded the Nebula Award for Outstanding
Magical Literary Achievements (NAOMLA)

Chapter 21: The Birthday Bash

July 31, 2002, Potter Manor...

Preparations for what would be called as the “party of the year” were taking place in the large, excessive residence of the Potters as Caterers and House Elves prepared the food while servants and waiters set up round tables on the lawn. Aurors and Hit Wizards constantly patrolled the grounds and checked the wards for any interference or disruption. The recent Death Eater Insurrection had hit the Auror Department hard. This was now the perfect target for them. After all, what better way to break morale then to kill one of their supposed Champions? Therefore, it was crucial that no harm came to the Girl-who-lived.

Harry, for his part, spent nearly zero time in the house that day, trying to avoid the ruckus. So, in a last desperate attempt, he holed himself up inside Gringotts much to the amusement of the Goblins. He had begged, blackmailed and at one time tried to bribe the Goblins to let him stay. Out of supposed sympathy, they let him hide out in the bank for a while. For a birthday celebrant of the day, he didn’t seem so happy.

Alex had taken to warding his room with dozens of different wards, some of them having roots from Basic Alchemy. He barricaded his room against any outside attempts to enter as he delved into the subject of Alchemy. Flamel would come again at the party to talk with his latest disciple in the Arts of Alchemy. He cared little for his sister’s birthday. Harry might have forgiven her, but he hadn’t. He still held some resentment towards the only female sibling they had.

Harry...

“I still don’t get why you’re hiding here of all places and from a party nonetheless.”

“Because, no one will ever think of it and I hate fame. I blame it for changing my sister into an annoying inconsiderate brat. I’ve seen what fame does to a person. I’m not willing to fall into its lure.”

"I guess. So how are your friends. The blonde one and the slightly pudgy one."

Thinking back, Harry, Drake and Neville hadn't talked much lately with everything going on. But they could catch up on things during the party. After all, most purebloods would be invited. It was tradition. It was a matter of a family name to uphold. "They have names you know. Drake's Father happens to be a very big client of yours and Neville's Family holds some wealth in this bank as well."

"We goblins do not care about their wealth. Respect begets respect."

"True, but surely you would favor them a bit more highly than those with lesser monetary assets within your race's establishment?"

"Favor, no. Priority, yes. They can kill themselves off for all we care. Human affairs have little importance to us unless it affects us. Only then will we exert ourselves to fight for our people."

"Very well, I suppose I can't change your mind about that. You Goblins have always been very stubborn about this." It was an age old argument he and Chamlore had. The idea of Goblin neutrality had been debated on ever since time in memorial. "Oh yes, before I forget, how did Griphook take the news?"

"Ah, why tell you when I can show you. We used a recording charm per your requests and duplicated a copy for you to bring home should you ever want to see the event again. You may consider it as your birthday present." Chamlore stated, handing him a vial that contained the memories in what would typically be called a pensieve. Of course, it was more than that. It was a specific type called the Anonymity Viewer designed to show events from a third person view to ensure independence of things in a Trial or when referring to the Recoded History Archive of the ICW.

Harry accepted the vial graciously and pocketed it. "So, this reminds me. What defensive mechanism did the Council finally decide up on for the deli?" Harry asked.

“Well, aside from the standard Ministry Protocol Wards, they sent in their Warders to apply a specialized set with three layers. The First Layer known as the Defensive Matrix which is supposed to stop outside magic to damage the outside structure. The Second Layer is called the Reminder Ward to remind customers to pay for the things so that they cannot plead the Forgotten Plea later on. The last one is called the Robber’s Pain Ward. It’s called that way because it uses unseen magical residue that strikes out against anyone who tries to steal from the place. It was supposed to stun them and put them in a stasis charm that can only be revived by an elf under your strict orders.”

“That’s quite ingenious.” Harry remarked, nodding his head in a satisfactory manner.

Lily Potter...

It was a hectic day for Lily Potter as she raced around the mansion, which was quite extensive, checking that everything for the party was set. She had several things to do still. First and foremost was to try to convince Alex to come out of his room during the party. Of course she rarely succeeded in either case. She had learned along time ago that she could not push her children to do things they refused to do stubbornly.

Alex held the position of Scion and as such the backing of James to ‘stand up against others. Katy was the girl-who-lived. One day she’d have to fight Voldemort and as such, what she wanted she got if it would help in her fight. It was only their duty to do so. Harry was the most stubborn of the lot, at least towards them anyway. The only person he would ever listen to was Alex, and in some cases he had to be threatened with being disowned. And even that was quickly losing its effectiveness. Once Alex was fifteen, he could reinstate Harry back to the family and it would look bad for the Potters if the press found out.

Alex’s adamant refusals to come out of his room were staggering. At times, he wouldn’t even eat anything the whole day just so that he could not go to the celebrations. She was almost convinced that he held some grudge towards his sister. That or he just conveniently

chose that same day to fast and become a hermit once a year. That didn't exactly make her feel any better.

Harry...

Sighing heavily, Harry moved away from the safety of Gringotts and reluctantly port keyed back to his home, or to be more precise on the beginning of the stone pathway that led to the Potter Manor a.k.a. the place where the party was being held. Groaning, he readied himself for what would be an annoying experience.

Within seconds of his somewhat dramatic entrance, dozens of people had swarmed up around him.

"Mr. Potter, how does it feel like to be the youngest holder of the Order of Merlin?"

"Mr. Potter, would you care to recall on your experience fighting against the Dark Wizard Quirell?"

"Mr. Potter, is it true you really saw you-know-who? Has the Ministry been lying to us Mr. Potter? Is he-who-must-not-be-named really still out there?"

"Do you have anything to say to your fans Mr. Potter?"

It was by sheer luck that Drake came to save him. He was thanking God that he had a favor to call on from him. Helping him escape from Parkinson brought a lot of gratitude from the blonde. "Gentlemen, ladies, I'm afraid Harold and I have some catching up to do. It's been such a long time since we've talked." He said. His eyes flashed dangerously at the gathered reporters. He had the look that said 'leave us alone or I'll make sure that my father gets you fired within the week'. The reporters backed away in fear, others rushing out as fast as possible. They still remembered the last unfortunate soul who had crossed the Malfoy Family. His life was made a living hell by the Ministry through Malfoy's manipulations.

Once the news people had gone away (well it was more like scrambling away and running for their lives sort of thing), Harry

sighed, greatly relieved he got away from those vultures. He wasn't made to deal with all this publicity. "Thanks for the rescue there Drake. I didn't know if I could take much more of that."

Drake shrugged nonchalantly. "Eh, it's the least I can do after you bailed me from having to marry Parkinson. So what's new in your life?"

"Oh you know the usual."

"By the usual do you mean doing crazy things, making never before seen ideas work and taking the world by storm?" Drake asked, brow raised.

"If by crazy ideas you mean using muggle ones then yes quite possibly. So where has Neville gone to? Haven't seen him all year now. It makes me wonder if he had disappeared."

"I think he and the Abbot girl are now an item by the amount of time they spend around each other. They spent more time together than any other two first years did. He completely forgot about us." Drake said, shaking his head.

"Now, now Draco, I'm sure they're just getting to know each other. They are friends after all. Besides, surely Selena has kept you busy."

"Not really. She's been spending more time with Daphne than me. It's a good thing Blaise and Theo were with me otherwise I might have gone insane from boredom. So where's Alex?"

"Alex is being himself again. Like every other birthday of my sister's, he locks himself in his room. It'd take a bloody miracle to make him go out willingly."

"Well I think that 'bloody miracle' just happened. Your brother's here. Look" Drake said, pointing at the striding form of Alex.

"This is probably one of the first times I've seen him come out of his room for the party. Wait, is Flamel here?"

“Yeah, you haven’t heard. It’s the third party he’s come for this year. This is going to make the headlines of the Prophet I heard. Between Flamel’s attendance, the girl-who-lived’s birthday bash and the Guardian of the Stone, Harry Potter, nothing could possibly top this event. Even the Minister’s Ball won’t receive this much publicity.” Drake said.

Harry groaned at the thought. More publicity meant more fame. That he did not need anymore of. “Alex has been studying Alchemy lately. I went into his room the other day and saw him reading a book called ‘The Alchemical Arts’. I’d bet he’s here to talk to Flamel about Alchemy.”

“You and your brother, always learning new thing.” Drake said, shaking his head.

“Hey, we go by the idea that you must live every day of your life to the fullest. For us that means learning. You can never run out of things to learn.”

“Sure, that’s nice and all but that leads me to my original question which you have yet to answer. Do you two even take time to relax?” The blonde aristocrat in training asked.

“Yes.” Harry replied simply.

“And what, pray tell, do you do in your relaxing time?”

“I read.” Harry answered nonchalantly.

“Read? That’s not relaxing. Relaxing is when you fly or play Quidditch. Relaxing is-”

“Relaxing is a state in which a person is relieved from stress. I am in such a state when I read. That so called me, relaxing.” Harry said, smirking at his friend.

Malfoy merely glared at him while muttering darkly. Likewise, Harry ignored his mutterings. This continued on for a few more minutes before Neville arrived. “Hi Harry, hi Drake.” He greeted casually.

“Hi Nev.” Harry greeted cheerfully.

“Nice to see you again Neville.” Draco said, continuing to mutter.

After a minute or so of standing awkwardly between his two silent friends, Neville spoke up. “Is something going on between the two of you?”

“Drake’s just jealous ‘cause I beat him in an argument. Again.” Harry said smugly.

“I am not!” Draco said indigenously.

“Yes you are.” Harry said.

“I’m not jealous. I’m just...annoyed.” Draco replied.

“Sure you are. So how’s your new wife to be Drake?” Neville asked.

“She’s fine and all but we haven’t spent that much time together. Not yet anyways. If you want to know more about her Daphne’s the one you should talk to. And what about Hannah? I hear she and you have been rather cozy with each other.” Draco said.

Blushing, Neville said, “She’s good. She’s good. And it’s only natural we spend time together. We’re friends after all.”

“And the fact that I’m supposed to be your best friend and you still spend more time with her than me counts for what?” Draco retorted.

“Well, Harry didn’t spend that much time with you. Are you saying he has a secret lover?” Neville answered.

“Hey! Leave me out of your squabbles. I’m not taking sides here.” Harry called out, which was promptly ignored by the two. The two continued to argue with each other sending back smart remarks to each other, answering questions with questions and the like. Seeing as he was no longer a part of the conversation, Harry left to find other people to talk to.

Katy and her new friend, the Weasley Girl Ginerva, were, by chance, the first two he came across to talk to. "Hey Harry. No one to talk to?"

"Hello Katherine, Ginerva," saying this made the latter shoot a glare at him which was ignored. "Draco and Neville are fighting over whether Neville actually likes the Abbot girl."

"Why would they do that? I thought they were an item already?" Katy said.

"Apparently, Neville and Hannah are the only two who don't know that yet."

"So Harry, I believe you've had the pleasure of being acquainted with Ginny? You were her escort during a dance at the Minister's Ball."

"Oh yes. I remember quite clearly. We played Quidditch during the visit to the Weasley's. I had no idea the male Weasley's were amateurs compared to their sister here." This earned him a grin from Ginny.

"Well Potter--"

"Please, call me Harry. After all, aren't we friends, sort of, after beating your brothers in a game they prided themselves in." Harry said, smirking at the thought.

"Well, Harry, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship." Ginny said. Ha! It'll be good to have her around. Think of all the chaos I could cause. Heh, if I'm lucky, she and Draco might go up against each other's throats. That would be amusing to watch. With Neville 'supposedly' spending more time with Abbot, at least I get to be entertained by this instead.

Alex...

Alex observed Harry keenly throughout the party. He's becoming more open, more social to others. He's finally healing from the neglect and antisocial environment that was put upon him by our

blasted family for 5 bloody long years. Still its nice to know he's recovering. He's also becoming friendlier, considering he initiated friendship with the Weasley girl.

Alex turned back his attention to Flamel. "How goes your learning, Apprentice?" Flamel asked.

"It goes well Master. I have sufficiently advanced in the creation of the Elixir of Immunity." Alex responded respectfully.

"The Elixir of Immunity? Are you trying to recreate my Master work dear boy? And I'd advise caution in advancing too quickly."

"Well why not? The information my brother has given me has done me a lot of good in my reverse engineering of your work. And besides Master, Knowledge is Power. You can never have enough knowledge."

"Knowledge may be power but power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Would you want to be corrupted by the power? It might feel good at first, but from my experience, it tends to harm you more than help you. It is alright to want to learn, but you must know when it is enough. Now, I want you to go back to the Chamber this school year to retrieve a book entitled The Drak'thul Corthantus El' Shiddar." Flamel instructed.

"What does that mean?" Alex said, confused by the strange title.

"Ha ha ha. I'm not surprised you don't understand. After all, it was the Goblins who told me what it meant. It is written in the Ancient tongue of the orcs, who were banished from this world for their hatred and cruelty thousands of years ago. It is translated roughly to mean The Dark Core of the Shamans."

Orcs? I've never heard of them before. I'll have to research more about this. Alex thought.

Chapter 22: Ginny's Wand and Some More Death Eaters

August 27, Diagon Alley...

Bustling crowds filled the City of Diagon, shopping for Hogwarts. Some of the lesser Elites and the High Class waited to get a chance to enter and dine in the newly opened Europe's Finest. Two of the greatest food tasters in Magical England had given it positive reviews and most were filled with excitement to get their hands on some foreign food without having to actually go abroad to do so. Wine and Cheese of this magnificent quality as this were hard to come by in most wizarding homes and a chance to stock up on them was too good to pass up. Of course, while the crowd may have been a fairly sized one for a new store, it wasn't too large. But it would make sure that the squibs working there would be very busy for a few months.

What most didn't know, however, was that the very same restaurant/deli was owned by one Harry James Potter who was currently sitting in Chamlore's office grinning while stroking his pet phoenix. "So it seems your business is a success." Chamlore said, handing Harry a butterbeer he had taken from personal 'cooler'. It was a sort of muggle thing to keep drinks cold. He himself had a bottle of Goblin sparkle juice in his hands.

"Yes, it would appear so, Chamlore. A toast to the success of Europe's Finest." Harry said.

"So tell me, Chamlore, how did you finally cover up all of those bribes we had to do to get this thing passed secretly?" Harry asked.

Chamlore grinned at him before saying, "Had them swear oaths never to tell another soul. Apparently, most of the people we bribed were new to the whole business." For once in his life, Harry was actually glad that the government was as corruptible as it was. He was pretty sure what he had ordered to be done would have assured that he would be given the special honor of getting to know the dementors very closely for three to five years.

“By the way, where is your brother? I haven’t seen him all summer and he’s usually with you on these meetings.”

Thinking, Harry decided to carefully pick the words he would use. “Alex was busy with other aspects.” Harry asked.

“Other aspects?” Chamlore repeated curiously.

“Other aspects.” Harry said again.

Western Shore of Lough Neagh, Death Eaters...

Rookwood stood in front of his army, gazing at the Ministry Aurors on the other side of the lake. Through his quick thinking and unpredictable strategies, they had scored several victories and now claimed everything west of their position. Their numbers had grown to nearly three thousand men, most of the new recruits being half-bloods.

Voldemort’s Purist Philosophy was slightly different from most purebloods under the basis of practicality. He argued that there wasn’t enough true wizarding blood left that was pure or else they’d die out. Half bloods though not completely pure, had enough wizarding blood to make sure they didn’t all die out. Besides, a half blood’s descendants could be made pure with enough time according to them.

The Resistance was quickly crumbling and if they could defeat them here, Northern Ireland would fall swiftly before them. The problem was that the Aurors, Civil Guards, and Local Militias had them outnumbered by more than three hundred men with more reinforcements coming by the hour in an effort to mobilize every man possible. And as if that wasn’t enough, they were placing defensive wards and runes to prevent magical entry as well as fortifications and traps.

That left one last means to transport his men for the siege, boats. Well, propelled rowboats to be exact. Once they reached the one mile mark of the opposing Northern Shore, they would send mass banishing charms to move faster to the shore quickly which would be

crucial if they were to succeed in landing with minimum casualties from oncoming Explosion Hexes.

However, there were three things in his favor: Morale, Strategy, and Experience. Morale was simple enough to explain. Experience came from the freed Death Eaters of the First War which had an edge over the current Aurors due to the fact that Aurors hadn't seen battle in a decade. And the last, most important weapon they had was Strategy or rather Flexibility and Mobility. The Resistance was composed mainly of ragtag civilians. Most of the Aurors would be pulled away to protect the 'girl-who-lived' from a supposed attack. These advantages, in the right hands, would serve as the instruments of defeat of the Resistance.

He signaled to his men to start boarding their boats. There were typically four people to a boat, following the style of Hogwarts Boats. They were traveling in groups, each boat defending the weak points of its companions until they formed unbreakable circles of shields. Ominously, the small fleet approached the Resistance, who stood and watched helplessly as their spells bounced uselessly from the clustered and well shielded boats. Their only hope now was that the defenses could hold until the next group of reinforcements from England could get to them.

Lough Neagh, Resistance Forces...

Auror Graham cursed silently in his head as he saw the numbers landing force of Death Eaters. Nearly half of his most reliable and most experienced people had been pulled out to safeguard the girl-who-lived today. Additional reinforcements would not get to them for hours. The boats were now about a hundred meters away from them and not a single one of them had sunk.

Sighing, he reluctantly gave the command. "FALL BACK TO THE SECOND LINE!" It was a good thing he had amplified his voice through a Sonorus Charm. Otherwise they might not have heard him and that would cause their formation to break. He was still amazed at how quickly and efficiently the Death eaters eliminated their chain of command until it was down to him. Well, considering that most of those higher than him were killed during the first wave of attacks it

was less of a surprise. They had caught them with their defenses down and they paid the price in blood.

Rookwood...

Rookwood gazed at the retreating backs of the Resistance. Using the Sonorus Charm, he ye ordered, "MEN, TAKE THE SHORE!" As one, the mass of canoes accelerated forward by strong Banishing Hexes. Within seconds, the first boat had landed. Within minutes, the fleet was assembled and ready for battle. The war for Ireland had just gone up a notch.

Lucius Malfoy...

It was a rather odd day for Lucius as he walked the streets of this rather famous Alley. His son and his wife were shopping for school things, and as such, he was left alone.

Normally, he'd wander around, looking for interesting things to take up his time but as of late, people were rushing of to some store as if to buy some grocery supplies. Despite appearing so, it had still caught his curiosity and seeing as there was nothing more interesting to do, he set out to go to this place with some reluctance.

Of course, he was shocked to find that this place was selling French Wine. It had been ages since he'd seen this quality of wine before. With some amazement he walked into the store/restaurant and started scanning the contents within.

Europe's Finest, Alan Blueridge...

Alan was a regular squib. His parent's had practically abandoned him when they found out. He had worked tirelessly though having no real skill that would be wanted in the wizarding world. Then, all of the sudden, there was news of a person who was looking for squibs to help run his restaurant. Most had been disbelieving but he was desperate. And as the desperate he was, he went to look for a job here. Although they had known their boss to be Harry Potter, they could not tell anyone. It was part of their contract. They didn't really

care anyhow. Pay was good, they worked amongst their kind, abuse was not tolerated.

Life was good here. He was part of the wizarding world and most of all, he had a purpose here. Granted, it was not that great, but it was still something. The door opened once more revealing one Lucius Malfoy. He went to him and showed him to a table respectfully. Alan had a feeling business was about to get lot better.

Harry...

"Well Chamlore, as much as I'd love to stay, I have to go find my family before they wonder where I've gone to." Harry said, standing up and turning to leave.

"Of course, Harry. By the way, catch." Chamlore said, throwing a bag to him. "You'll need money to shop today so they don't get suspicious. Say hi to Alex for me."

"Will do." Harry said, leaving. He leisurely strolled out of the Goblin run establishment and through the crowded roads of Diagon Alley, eventually reaching Flourish and Blots, the currently largest bookstore in England.

Of course, one of the biggest problems of being the only book store in Diagon Alley that sold books had its advantages. One of the problems was that there was a lack of space causing there to be a very long line outside the bookstore. Of course, it was times like this when being an internationally famous person had its advantages. As the 'Savior of the Stone', Harry was quickly allowed to enter by the crowd. All he merely had to do was say 'Excuse me, I'm in a rush'.

Of course once he got in, his fame wasn't that great. He had, unfortunately, missed the sign outside saying Lockhart was signing autographs. "My Stars! Harry Potter." That was all Harry heard before a man tried to drag him. Harry reacted immediately. He drew his wand hastily and spun around, pointing at the man's chest.

The man had stopped in shock but was still holding Harry. "I could have you arrested for trying to drag me away, stranger." Harry said coldly.

Harry was quite surprised when the man started to laugh. "You must have mistaken me for someone else. I am Gilderoy Lockhart. It is a pleasure to meet you Harry."

"That's Mr. Potter to you, Mr. Lockhart. Only my friends and family may call me by my first name." Harry said, pocketing his wand.

"Very well, Mr. Potter. I apologize for this entire ordeal. To show how sorry I am, I'll be giving you a complete set of my work, free of charge." Lockhart signaled to one of the bookstore's helpers to give Harry the said set of books. Harry accepted them indifferently, before going off to find his sister.

He found her talking to Ginerva by the Charms Section of the store. "Katy, there you are."

"Hey, Harry." Katy said.

"Where's father and mother?" Harry asked.

"Mum took dad to Madam Malkin's to try on new robes." Katy said. "Why?"

"I still have to go to Ollivanders for my new holsters. You want to come?" Harry said.

"Sure. Ginny, what about you?"

"Well, I have to ask my mum first." Ginny said.

"Well alright, go ask her then." Harry said. Ginny left to find her mum leaving Harry and Katy alone. "So what happened while I was gone."

"Mr. Weasley and Mr. Parkinson got into a muggle fistfight." Katy said plainly.

Harry's mouth dropped. "Parkinson? As in Lord Varis Parkinson When did this happen?"

"Ten minutes before you came. Too bad you didn't get here in time. Where were you anyway?" She inquired.

"Gringotts." Harry answered.

Katy opened her mouth as if to say something when Ginny came back and cut her off. "Ok let's go." And go they did.

Lucius Malfoy...

There were few things in Lucius' life that he was dissatisfied with. He had an excessively large home, a beautiful, charming and intelligent wife, a respected man in society, and a son worthy of the Malfoy name. But now, he could die happy. After years of lacking a place to buy good wine consistently, God had answered his prayers at last. Finally, he could buy the best cheese and meat in Europe. Life was good.

Ollivanders...

It was another plain day for Ollivander as he worked painstakingly to find suitable wands for the youths of today. He had been successful thus far and he hoped to be successful still. It was a shame some people refused their children wands because of financial reasons. Ollivander heard a ringing sound indicating someone had entered his shop. He made his way to the front to greet them.

"Ah, Mr. Potter, Ms. Potter, and Ms. Weasley, I suppose you are here for your wand Ms. Weasley and of course your holster Mr. Potter. Charmed as you wish and imported from Japan."

"What do you mean Ms. Weasley's wand. Are you telling me she doesn't have her own?" Harry asked curiously. Ginny looked down in shame at the revelation.

"If she has one, it isn't one of my making and those are rare you know." Ollivander said.

“Well that won’t do. We’ll take the holster with her new wand. I’ll pay.” Harry said.

“Really Harry this isn’t necessa-”

Harry cut her off quickly before she could argue. “None sense. No witch or wizard could hope to achieve their maximum potential without a wand of their own. Think of it as my birthday gift or a sign of our new friendship.”

“My parents-”

Harry stopped her from protesting any further. “I’ll take care of them.”

“Well, I guess...” Ginny said, conceding to the enduring Potter Apprentice.

“Great let’s find a wand for you.” Harry turned. “Mr. Ollivander, she is yours to equip.” Harry said, giving a mock bow.

Ollivander chuckled at Harry’s antics. “Very well, Mr. Potter. I shall do my best to ‘equip’ her. Let’s see now, she’s about 5’2 in height so the wand would be 10 to 11 inches. Try this, Unicorn Horn and New Zealand White Pine, eleven inches, excellent for healing. Give it a wave.” Ginny took the outstretched wand and waved it. The effects were... unpleasant.

Harry’s robes caught fire. Yelping in surprise, he threw down his robes and blasted it with a Water Spray charm. “Well, this narrows the list down. She has a fiery nature.” Harry said.

“Really now? How did you ever find out, Harry?” Ginny said mockingly.

“Try this then. Blazing Oak and Phoenix Feather, ten inches.” This one had slightly better or worse effects depending on who you ask. The robes Harry had recently put out of fire blazed up again, slightly burning Harry’s hand.

“OW! Ginny, could you direct your fiery personality to something else? That actually hurt you know!” Harry said.

“Fine, fine.” She muttered.

“Perhaps not the right fit. But I can feel we’re getting very close to finding the wand. Maybe this will work. Here, Red Maple Branch and Phoenix’s Feather, ten and a half inches.” This time, fortunately for Harry, the burns on Harry’s hands healed itself when Ginny waved the wand. “We have a match.” Ollivander said. “Twenty Galleons for the wand and three hundred and five galleons for the Holster.”

Harry quickly paid Ollivander for the wand and the holster before he turned to leave with Ginny and Katy. It was by some stroke of fate or what not that Molly Weasley chose that time to enter the store, looking for Ginny. “Ginny, we’re about to-” She stopped talking as she saw the brand new wand in her daughter’s wand. “GINVRA MOLLY WEASLEY, where on earth did you get the money to buy that NEW wand!” Molly half asked, half yelled.

“I bought it for her Mam.” Harry answered for the slightly frightened girl.

Mrs. Weasley calmed down a bit when she heard that. “Now Harry, Ginny knows better than to abuse her friendship with you.”

“With all due respect Mam, buying it was my idea. It’s my...birthday gift to her.”

Mrs. Weasley hesitated a bit after this. She didn’t like the idea of accepting charity from the boy but it was a birthday gift to her daughter. If she refused to allow her to keep it, it might insult the boy.

Seeing that Mrs. Weasley was deciding if she should let Ginny keep the wand, Harry decided to take no chances. “Mrs. Weasley unless you snap her new wand yourself there’s nothing you can do about it. You are aware of Mr. Ollivander’s no refund policy.” Harry said.

“He’s right you know. The girl will never reach her own potential without a wand of her own.” Ollivander commented.

“Very well, I suppose she could keep the wand. Thank you for the gift Harry. That’s very kind of you.” She said, turning to leave with Ginny. Later that day, a very satisfied Harry thought back on how easily he had convinced Mrs. Weasley to accept the gift for Ginny. All in all, it was a good day.

Chapter 23: To Hogwarts and to the King

Potter Manor, September 1, 8:59 AM

Harry was currently sitting in the living room area of the house. As always, he had packed days before the trip to Hogwarts. As always, Katy hadn't. This led to the fact that the scene last year was reenacted by the parents, and Katy which was basically running around the house trying to pack her things. Secretly, Harry always wondered why they never asked the house elves to do it. It would have been much quicker.

Alex had been rather...distant lately. He had barely seen him all summer, much less talked to his brother. It got to a point where Harry had to train by himself for weeks. He supposed it was only normal. He was exploring in a new field of magic and Alex was rather devoted to studying Alchemy nowadays. It was a bit frightening actually. But it was his brother's choice, who was he to interfere?

Percy had been giving him constant reports from his position in the Ministry. The reports were not that important but Percy was till a Junior official. That was rapidly changing ,however, as he seemed to be gaining favor in the eyes of the Minister through the Malfoy's backing. It had, unfortunately, caused him to be distanced from his own family.

From what Harry could gather from Percy's reports, there was an Insurrection up in Ireland which was pushing back the Aurors rapidly. How the Ministry had kept it from the public for so long was quite a feat. Apparently, they had blockaded any unauthorized means of transportation in Northern Ireland. It would only be a matter of time before the Press got a hold of the news, however, and the country would go into panic.

Of course, the press tended to exaggerate on things so it wouldn't be surprising if they wrote something more like Death Eaters had taken over all of Ireland. Funnily enough, that would cause the public to call for the withdrawal of Resistance Forces allowing the Death Eaters to take over Ireland. Hopefully, that wouldn't happen. If Ireland fell,

Scotland would be next and Harry didn't need a repeat of the Death Eater attack. It was sure to be worse if it ever happened again.

King's Cross Station, 10:29 AM...

It was a rather normal day at King's Cross Station for the unsuspecting people who were walking about to their daily commute. Little did they know that from within the Station itself held the Wizarding Britain's largest moving form of transport, the Hogwarts Express. One of the finest ever created models of muggle transportations built with magical properties and made by magic. It was one of the prides and glories of the U.K..

Harry was disappointed at this. A train could hardly be considered a feat, even a magically built one at that. There was simply nothing that special about it. Most of the magical features of the train had been disabled long ago and the defensive mechanisms had fallen apart due to poor maintenance. It had become, essentially, an ordinary train. Why Dumbledore had never restored the defensive capabilities of the train was beyond him.

The Potter Family walked at a fast pace through the crowd of muggles, in plain black robes, desperately trying to get to the train before the barrier sealed. In their haste, they had forgotten to dress like muggles. It would create some problems for them if their children did not reach Hogwarts on time and their public image would suffer and what not. Of course, Katy was the one they were most worried about. Alex, was already on the train, leaving the rest of the family behind, and as always, Harry was with him when he went.

Compartment #61, Cart 9...

Harry walked into a luckily empty compartment while dragging his trunk. The train seemed to be much fuller than usual. There are probably more first years incoming. Harry thought, deducing it as the reason why the train seemed so full this year. He took out a random book from his trunk and started reading for a few minutes before he felt the train start to move.

Sighing, he stopped reading momentarily and pulled out a small spherical device from his Trunk. He tapped the device three times with his wand causing the sphere to hum vibrantly. A wave of magic passed through him and settled at the boundaries of the compartment. Content with the results, he pocketed the device.

The device was actually a Portable Ward Field Generator. It was created during the Great War of Grindelwald because of the need to set up portkeys quickly and easily. Warders were uncommon those days and there was always a risk of the Warder dying in combats or raids. Thus, the Portable Ward Field Generator was created for fast easy and reusable deployment. Unfortunately, it was hard to produce one requiring months. Then, its value and rarity dramatically increased when a large stockpile of them got blown to bits by several Explosion Hexes in France whilst being transported to the front lines. The war ended shortly after that and production was halted.

He had gotten it from Alex as a birthday gift. Harry didn't actually now how Alex had gotten a hold on one of them. But it was his brother's secret and it would remain that way. His best guess was that Alex got it while gambling in Monaco.

The only actual downside to the device was it could only create wards that were made before its invention. No wizard had tried to update its selection to use newer or more improved wards. That's why its use was limited to personal matters and mostly inapplicable to professional field of warding. But still, it was pretty handy some times if used correctly. It had a 1 mile warding radius after all. That had to be worth something.

"Harry, Neville, Malfoy. Can I sit here?" A voice asked, clearly holding some hostility against the blonde which brought Harry out of his musings. He looked up to see the small body of Ginny Weasley standing in their compartments doorway with her arms crossed.

In response Drake glared at her and was about to say something when Harry cut him off by saying, "Sure.", knowing that this would annoy his friend even more. But in his defense, he was bored and reading a book was getting old. Well, okay maybe it wasn't such a great reason but there was little Drake could do now as he had

allowed her to stay. Refusing her would be rude. Well, more so than usual according to pureblood customs and what not. Added to that, directly going against Harry's acceptance of her request could be considered as going out against Harry and insulting him and the Weasley. That was a position he did not want to be in...ever.

"Hello Weasley. How nice of you to join us." Malfoy said, the contempt clearly in his voice.

"Now, now Malfoy, there's no need to be so sarcastic about how you feel to me staying here." Ginny said, slightly smirking. Malfoy, in response, glared even more. He seemed to be doing that a lot these days. For the remainder of the trip, Ginny and Malfoy largely ignored each other, much to Harry's dismay. He was hoping they would argue but it seemed they preferred to ignore each other. Life wasn't fair.

Of course, to make matters worse, Slivenson and his lackeys decided to pass by his compartment and 'conveniently' stumble upon theirs by 'accident'. That of course meant they did it on purpose which only served to annoy Harry. "Potter, Malfoy, Longbottom, and what's this, a Weasley? Interacting with these scum. Pitiful. Your family has really sunk that far. What Dumbledore sees in your family, I'll never know." Slivenson said, sneering in contempt.

This had an obviously crushing impact on Ginny who was a fangirl of the children-who-lived. Having insult her family and herself, well suffice to say, it easily tore her apart emotionally. This of course, made Harry more annoyed than ever before for two reasons. He did not want to spend his train ride to Hogwarts, which would last several hours, with an emotionally unstable girl in his compartment. Secondly, he just hated Slivenson's guts and seeing him more than he had to annoyed him for no particular reason. It was actually getting redundant having to blast Slivenson at least once a year during the train ride. Slivenson was always a bit slow, seeing as the boy never got a chance to say anything else before he was thrown out of the compartment (violently and magically blasted away) only reaffirmed this fact.

Ginny continued to cry for a majority of the trip despite Neville's best efforts to cheer her up or make her stop. Draco ignored her to a

greater extent, not really caring about a "Blood Traitor", and engaged HARRY in a conversation instead. "So Harry, are you going to try out for Quidditch this year? If you like, I could easily ask my father to bring it up with the Board of Governor's and overrides Dumbledore's decision about Quidditch. It wouldn't be much of a hassle really." Draco stated.

"Thanks for the offer Drake, but no tahnks. I don't think I'll be playing Quidditch for a while." Harry said absentmindedly.

"Well, okay, if you say so. But remember, the offers always available." Drake said, sounding a bit disappointed. "By the way, what happened to the Mages last year? I heard they all went renegade and turned on each other."

"That's not exactly what happened. It was more like their having a sort of civil war because of a power struggle. That's why it seemed like they turned on each other." Harry said.

"Right, so how are you going to deal with them this year?"

"I don't have to. The Ministry has increased Auror presense in the school with an additional five squads of eight. The Mages won't last long if they continue trying to kill each other off." Harry said.

"Well, if you say so. By the way, why's the Blood Trai-" Draco immediately stopped talking, not wanting to complete the insult by the look Harry was giving him. "Fine, why's she here. She's a lackey of Slivenson isn't she?"

"Ginny's here because she's my friend. And she is not his 'lackey' per se, it's more like a fan or a crush if you will. Besides, Slivenson hates her now because she's with us. His open defiance to her being friends with us will only serve to make her even more loyal to us and hate him more, in time. Of course there's always the chance she sways into his camp but she will not recieve a warm reception. Her upbringing will be against such a move. If she decides to stay with us, then the Weasley's will not side with Slivenson during any future conflicts because of how he treats her now. That would cause

problems for Dumbledore and you know how much I love messing with the Headmaster." Harry explained.

Draco sighed and shook his head at his friend's explanation. He could be cold sometimes when he wanted to.

Ionos, Eris, Zyder, Montfortal...

Rigan looked out of his chamber's window overlooking nearly the whole city. He could see his people, walking about, going with their daily lives. Of course, that wasn't exactly a good thing. If it hadn't been for massive militia recruitment, a good 30% of the people would be unemployed. Starvation was quickly overcoming the state and raiders, mercenaries, and misfits of society were rampant in this once powerful state. The rule was crumbling quickly because of they had no ruler. The Lord was the only one who could ever truly be called their King, no one else. Without him, only so much could be done.

He was interrupted from his musings by a short knock on the door. "Enter." He said, turning around to see who it was. Agent Faren entered the chambers somewhat excitedly. "Agent Faren, what news do you have?" Rigan inquired.

"Council Lord, we've done it! We've found him out! He is the Heir Apparent of the Throne. Gringotts Goblins were persuaded in a petition to the Goblin Council to view Harry Potter's file." The Elite said, handing a file to his superior. "Certain aspects we came over in his test results have led us to believe he is the Heir Apparent because of the details accuracy in comparison with the Prophecy of Reinstatement. Almost all the requirements have been fulfilled except one. No one has ever gotten this far. Only one more requirement stands within him and the Throne."

For the first time in a very long time, Rigan felt hope in him to finally be able to pass the Throne to an Heir. After all his years of loyal service and patience, things were finally falling into place. As he looked through the file, he saw the single unfulfilled requirement highlighted. All his hopes were immediately and utterly crushed as he

read one single line. His eyes widened in shock. "No. It can't be." He said fearfully.

"I'm afraid it has to be my lord. If he is not an adult, he cannot rule. The prophecy was very clear on that. It would be another five years before that happens." Faren said with a hint of sadness.

A new sense of mission flooded into Rigan as he began thinking of a plan to protect the Heir. His survival and existence was necessary or a hindrance to certain people." "Faren, gather as many loyalists as you can from the Elites and the militia. Have them pledge their allegiance. Start setting up a guard duty for the boy. He must be protected at all costs. Nothing and no one harms the boy but do not reveal your existence to anyone. This must be kept a secret. Therefore, I am allowing, enacting, and mobilizing a new order specifically for the defense of his majesty to be known as the Guardians of the Dragon. It falls under no one's jurisdiction and is considered exempt from any law in the defense of his Highness. Go Faren. Time is against us." Rigan commanded sternly.

Faren saluted. "Yes sir. I will not fail." Faren ran out the chamber and began rallying those who would be most loyal to an idea of a new King. This was now a race against time to secure the most number of men between the new Heir and the others. The Game had changed. The Match was set.

Chapter 24: The Guardians Rise

7:23 PM September 1, 2002, Hogwarts...

The school year had started anew, marked by the legendary sorting of Hogwarts as the UK's finest and elites came to attend the most prestigious school in the country and, in their biased opinion, possibly the world. A Crowd of fresh incoming First Years stood nervously outside the doors to the Great Hall listening carefully to everything the Deputy Headmistress was telling them. While inside the Great Hall was an even bigger group of students more senior to the new incomers, who were, as of now, starving and cursing Hogwarts' tradition for taking so long with the sorting.

Harry Potter and Draco Malfoy were, however, not part of that group. "It was a good thing we already ate on the train Harry, otherwise we'd be starving right now along with the rest of them." Drake said.

"So, you have your money ready?" Harry asked.

"I'm always ready to get some free money from other people." Drake replied.

Raising a brow, Harry said, "More like losing money to them."

"Keep on dreaming Potter. This year, I will win. You'll see." Drake said.

"I'll believe it when I see it." Harry replied. Just then, the doors banged open signifying the beginning of the continued on like the years before with McGonagall reading out the names from a scroll.

"Aviris, Rhoan." McGonagall read as said student in particular went up to the sorting hat to get, well, sorted.

"5 Galleons says she's in Ravenclaw." Drake said.

"Fine, 5 on Gryffindor for me." Harry said.

"...RAVENCLAW!" The enchanted Hat shouted causing Drake to pump his fist in the air victoriously. Harry handed the money to his friend.

"Bithamis, Carius."

"5 on Hufflepuff." Harry said quickly.

"5 on Gryffindor." Drake replied.

"...SLYTHERIN!" The Hat yelled.

"Tie then. 5 on Hufflepuff for me next." Drake said.

"Blueridge, Anderson."

"5 on Gryffindor." Harry said.

"...GRYFFINDOR!"

A nearby Slytherin had noticed their somewhat odd activities. "Hey Draco, waht are you guys doing?" He asked.

"We're betting on which houses the first years get into, Blaise." Drake replied. He turned to Harry for a moment, stopping to say, "By the way, 5 on Slytherin next."

To which Harry replied, "Fine, 5 on Hufflepuff for me."

"...SLYTHERIN!" Ah, the sound of the name was music to Drake's ears as he collected money from his friend.

"Want to join us Blaise? It's easy money, you know." The Zabini boy shook his head, though the mirth could be seen in his eyes.

"No thanks." Blaise turned to talk to the Greengrass girl beside him.

One hour and hundreds of bets later...

In the end, it had been a close match with Drake winning by just three more than Harry. Most of the first years were unfamiliar and unimportant to Harry except one. Ginny, being Harry's newest friend, sort of, kept to the proud Weasley tradition of being a Gryffindor. Harry had a feeling her sorting in would be the start of a long hatred between Clan Weasley and Clan Slivenson. Especially after what he said to her on the train and if he doesn't apologise soon. Perhaps in a year or two considering her possible crush on him. All Slivenson had to do was be mean to her and the result would be a blood feud. Well, a possible blood feud anyway. Slivenson would need to take it to a new level of hatred and torment to initiate that, then the Weasleys would have to retaliate to finalize a blood feud.

Harry turned his attention back to Dumbledore's speech, sensing he was about to say something of relevance to him. "...And now, I am happy to present your new teacher," Harry froze. No, Dumbledore couldn't have been that stupid to hire him. Anyone but that moron. "Gilderoy Lockhart." CURSE YOU DUMBLEDORE! Harry thought angrily. Dumbledore's announcement was met with avid clapping, more so from the female population and less eagerly from the males. Harry was, well, banging his head on the table repeatedly while other Slytherins looked upon him as if he had gone mad. Well, technically, they thought he was enough crazy already.

"Harry, you're starting to remind me of my house elf with the way you're punishing yourself like that." Drake commented, smirking a little.

Harry stopped to glare at Malfoy before turning to glare alternatively between Lockhart and Dumbledore. "You know, I could make your life a lot harder if I burned your Christmas Present that I gave you." Drake involuntarily winced at the thought. He had been given an Storage Bag which stored all of his books and felt as light as a feather. Creators of these kinds were rare in England and Alex had bought dozens of them for Harry on one of his trips to France. As if he could buy one of those things if he couldn't speak French. You could always charm your bag to act like it, but to constantly renew it was more of a hassle than buying one or finding out how to make it. Besides, creating one without a permit to do so was 'against the law'. And to get a permit you had to have an E at least in your NEWTs for

Charms. Drake wisely kept silent at the ominous threat presented before him.

Dinner ended soon enough and the prefects led the students back to their common rooms. Well, except for Harry as only the staff and the Potters knew where his was. Saying good night to his friends, He leisurely strolled down to his own private room. As soon as he reached his room, however, he noticed a letter on the table. He picked it up and read through it.

Sir,

I know you gave me explicit instructions to keep contact to a minimum as to not blow our cover but we've come across a problem that requires your attention. Several prominent purebloods (including but not limited to: Lucius Malfoy, Jarius Felix, John Parkinson, Sirius Black, James Potter, and Remus Lupin (known werewolf)) have seen our apparent success and have been pushing me to sell stocks to them. Unfortunately, I am unable to do so for reasons which should be obvious to you. We need your approval to sell and how many can be sold, if you are going to sell at all. You must also specify who or what may or may not buy stocks. Attached to this letter is a form in which you can fill out the specifics.

Gilbert Trueson

Manager of Europe's Finest

Sighing, Harry quickly filled out the form specified stating specifically that werewolves be allowed to buy as well. He pitied Remus really. All of his opportunities were wasted due to the bias of the world against his kind. He couldn't very well shut the purebloods out completely but they could not be allowed control. By making sure that his father, his father's best friend, and his best friend's father all bought some shares, his control could and would never be challenged. As if they could anyway. Put together, all of them were allowed to buy a maximum of 30% of all shares and stocks. Harry sent the letter off quickly and turned to go to his bed for some well deserved rest.

Ionos, Montfortal, the Outer Chambers...

Dragon Elite and Senior Agent Orthex better known as Blade to other Elites nervously stood with 8 of his fellow warriors and another 23 guards. The reason for their presence was, as of yet, unknown to him. Although he expected to find out soon enough. Earlier that day he was interrogated by an unknown Elite about his loyalties and was asked to swear loyalty to no one else but the King of Ionos, if a new one should be discovered. He did so, of course, as was his duty as an Elite. Being asked to reaffirm that vow was a right anyone could ask of him. Then, he was requested to come here, at this ungodly hour, if he wanted to know more. Curiosity obviously got the better of him seeing as he was here in the first place.

A hooded man suddenly stepped out of the shadows with an emblem of a blue shield and a dragon saking around the shield protectively stitched into his robes. "Welcome, all of you. You are all no doubt wondering why you are here. You have been assembled because of the recently authroized Proclamation No. 582 of the Council Lord Falthas Rigan aka the Guardians Degree." He said, throwing a copy of the Proclamation at a nearby Elite. "For those of you here, it means you have been given the opportunity to be part of a new force dedicated solely to the protection of the new Heir Apparent that was located a few months ago secretly. Those willing may come over to my side. Those who are not, leave. There is no tunring back after this. No revealing. Total Secrecy." He said, his words clearly having a large impact of the gathered party.

He looked around for a while before continuing, "Since none of you have left, I will assume you will all join. The Dragon's Guard better known to us as the Guardians has been created to keep an eye over the new secret Heir Apparent until his Ascension to the throne at all costs, though our existance must not be revealed to him if it can be helped. You are to attend to your duties normally except for when it is your shift to guard of which you will be exempted from anything else which might interfere. Remember, our sole duty above all is to the Heir, no one is above him."

Orthex finally gathered the courage to speak up and ask a question that had been plaguing the mind of nearly everone present. "Who are you really? You are a Senior Elite. I can tell from the uniform, but I

know none of them which would do this or report to the Council Lord directly enough to be given the important role of leading us."

The man smiled at the question and revealed his face to them, making most of the Elites pale rapidly. Agent Faren Serathi. The Lone Hunter. The Dark Wolf. He was a legend in the Elites ranks as one of the last highest ranking and surviving Senior Elitists. He was the best warrior in thier ranks and was said to match that of their Supreme Commander. He disappeared exactly one year ago during a reconnaissance mission and was never heard of since. "Do you have any more questions, Apprentice Blade? Or is it Senior Agent now?" The man asked jokingly. Of course, Orthox never heard the question as he fainted from shock almost immediately. "For now, I want the Elites to take the Guard Shifts of the Heir. All Guards will continue further training from me until I have deemed you skilled enough to carry out your duties acceptably. As a final message to you all, try to bring in more people to our order, but be silent about it and make sure you are certain of their loyalties before you introduce them to us. Until then, no one else must know of this. Understood?"

"Sir yes Sir." Everone replied.

"Good."

"...The Dragon's Guard and the Harbingers of Fury stand as a testimony of the sheer fanatacism which had plagued Ionos for years upon the Ascension of a new King. They are some of the most elite and loyal squads the world has ever being classed with organizations such as the Warriors of the Dark of Japan, the Delta Squadron of U.S.A., and the Order of Rasputin of Russia, the Musketeers of Honor from France, the Pharoah's Legionnaires from Egypt, the Brazzilian Shadow Hunters, the Mounted One from Canada, the German League of Magic, and the Chinese Imperial Phoenix Legion..."

-excerpt from: The Elite Forces, Chapter II: Ionos: The Hidden Power, by Anton Lukhelm

Chapter 25: Thoughts and War

September 2, 5:30 AM...

It was a freezing September morning that day as Harry went through his daily routine of exercise otherwise referred to as running. He was wearing very light clothes as he ran and if it wasn't for the warming charms he had placed on his clothes, he would most likely have died from the cold. By now, his exercising was still remarkably unknown to the student populace, mostly because they were too lazy to get up that early in the morning and so, had no idea of what he was doing. Unbeknownst to Harry, the only person on the staff who knew of his exercising was currently pondering in his office about Harry Potter.

There were many things about Harry which had surprised Dumbledore as time passed by and he had began to take a mild interest in him. He had thought that Harry would be in Gryffindor because of his Potter Heritage. He had thought Harry would be jealous of Katy because of her fame and that more attention was given to her. He had thought he would just be another ordinary boy. He was wrong in all those things, and so much more. Harry Potter had become an enigma to Dumbledore, a seemingly unsolvable mystery, a puzzle of which he was missing so many vital pieces. And that was a potentially dangerous thing. Currently, Dumbledore didn't even know which camp he was in. He was against Voldemort, that much was known from his actions last year. But he wasn't with Dumbledore either. It was a well known fact that Harry despised Slivenson.

All this into account, it seemed to most people that Harry would side with the Ministry if the war started up again. Unfortunately, it wasn't so simple as that, Dumbledore knew. Harry did not support the Ministry all too much, he supported it less than most ordinary folk actually. The single person who held his unwavering loyalty was Alexei Victor Potter, his brother and mentor. Alex was already growing to be a powerful force to reckon with magically and politically. Over the last year, Alex had been building up his political standing in the Ministry and gathering influence of a sort. His political power was bolstered tenfold when Harry had saved the Stone. By then, it was

well known Alex had Harry's backing in almost anything. His influence spread internationally.

This year was the time Alex would come into his final stage of Heirship training and he would most likely be given a minor voting seat by proxy from the Potter Family Line and whatever extinct family they had assimilated in time. All purebloods at present had several minor families seats in the Wizengamot. This was a bad thing. Alex would prove to be the leader of the middlemen so to speak. Those not under any group would most likely join Alex's camp; the decisive voters who decided everything. Whoever Alex leaned towards would have the most power in the Wizengamot. Everything the Order had strived for over the years would be in danger of being repealed.

Perhaps the worst thing that happened because of his alienation of the Potter brothers was, in an indirect way, what pushed Katy even further away from him. Slivenson's actions had been...infuriatingly stupid. He was waging a personal war with the Potters and all who stood with them to a near fanatical degree. The Longbottoms and the Malfoys were now leaning more and more towards the Potters because of their childrens friendship with Harry. The Weasley's were starting to hate Slivenson as well if he was right in his assumptions. First, Percival Weasley had quickly sided with Harry, spreading news of Slivenson's aggression to his family and planting the seeds of doubt. Then, Ron Weasley was befriended by Katy after being rejected and insulted by Slivenson. This only served to deepen the Weasley's doubt of Slivenson. Finally, the twins and Ginevra sided with the Potters, after being so insulted by the "boy-who-lived". Ever so slowly, Slivenson was splitting apart the Order.

Slivenson must learn some more control. Dumbledore thought. Harry would have been a good influence on him had they not hated each other so quickly. The Weasleys and the Longbottoms had been driven away from him and I fear that when the war comes, no one will wish to support him anymore. Not when Harry is there. As it stands, Harry would have a better chance surviving against Voldemort's attacks then Robert would. Robert is simply wasting his time with plots of revenge. Dumbledore sighed sadly. Katy is the only chance the world now has against Voldemort if I cannot change Robert. But I must try. For his sake, I must start mending the rifts between myself

and the Potters. And knowing that they might have inherited their parent's stubbornness, I guess it is up to me to make the first move. I fear they will be vindictive.

5:00 PM, Ireland, 20 miles north of Lisburn...

In reality, it wasn't hard to see that the Death Eaters had won. Had it not been for the fact that muggle attacks were few. They were already free to attack anywhere in Ireland and yet, they had wisely decided to crush all resistance first. Break the spirits of the people. Destroy their hope for freedom. And in wanting to do so, they created their own tactical weakness and inflexibility; Massing all their forces into one single place. It was a strategic move on the Death Eaters part, a double edged sword, if you will. By doing this, they created a battle that could decide the fate of the war. If they could manage to break through the Auror lines, Ireland would fall to them easily. If they could not, however, it created an opportunity for the Aurors to reclaim Ireland as well as break their momentum in one fell swoop.

Unfortunately, this meant that fewer reinforcements could be expected as for the plan to work, they needed to use the tactic known as the Double Edged Pincer. It was one of the first military combat maneuvers ever developed in Magical England and was a common strategy to change the favor of the war. While the enemy moved in to destroy a desperate defensive line, a fraction of the reinforcements would sneak behind and take lands in a Blitzkreig like fashion and after doing so, would trap the enemy forces between the two groups. If the enemies managed to break the defensive line however, the plan backfires completely and allows them to not only crush both groups seperately, it gives them the opportunity to end the war in a swift manner, so to speak. In the end, it all boiled down to who was the fastest in doing what they were supposed to do. Speed was everything. It was the single most crucial factor of the whole tactic. It was a race, in essence.

Currently, there were 487 Aurors and 619 Militias in the Resistance and Death Eaters numbered around 3000 to 4000 after the mass recruitment drives they've been doing. The odds were highly against

them, even though they had terrain advantage the sheer number of enemies they'd have to face was astronomical. Even during the First War against Voldemort, no battle had ever amounted to this many Death Eaters all assaulting one place.

Graham sighed as he read the reports from the Reconnaissance teams sent out earlier. The Death Eaters, it seemed, were still staying put in their base. Aside from reports of small groups of ships moving to and fro the Lake, nothing much was happening. They were planning for something big. Everything for the Double Edged Pincer Tactic. All they had to do now was wait them out to start attacking.

Three Hours Later, Rookwood...

Rookwood stood on top of a cliff with his second in command, Falus Brimshore. The Ministry was foolish to think I could be fooled so easily by their Stratagem. It is rather insulting really. I was, after all, one of the best Unspeakable's Battle Analysts before I joined the Dark Lord. Unknown to them, I have already sent out small groups of Death Eaters to reinforce my holdings. The groups are small enough that the Ministry would never notice them or be bothered about it. They were walking into a death trap. Over the past five days, I have steadily sent back men that there were over half a thousand of his men across the lake. The Aurors would never know what hit them. He thought deviously.

"Brimshore, ready the men. We strike at midnight." He ordered sternly.

"Yes Sir. Should I send out the Liberation Expeditionary Force or do you want them as part of the assault group?" Brimshore asked.

"Send them out. We still outnumber them and the benefits of a success in that mission will demoralize them quite easily. Also, send out the last batch of our infiltrators. Tell them to spread word of the plan to the others. When they have the gates open, tell them to send out a signal of green sparks. Oh, and I want the commander assassinated as well but it is a secondary task." Rookwood instructed.

"At once Commander Rookwood." Brimshore said, bowing slightly before moving towards the camp to do his assigned tasks.

Three Hours Later, Auror Camp...

It was supposed to be a simple guard duty shift for Gerald Moorson. But Death Eaters had a spectacular talent for screwing up one's life. The night shift he belonged to was assigned to keep watch over the gates when they were attacked, all too suddenly, by dozens of Death Eaters. They had fought back of course, but they were outnumbered and outpowered by the sheer ferocity at which the Death Eaters fought. It took a matter of minutes before they were forced to their backs at the gate.

"Hahaha, give it up Aurors. You are done for. Surrender now and we will make your deaths quick." A Death Eater, presumably the one in charge of them, jeered. The other Death Eaters started laughing as well.

Moorson took this time to start harnessing his magic to buy them more time, hopefully. He quickly pointed his wand at the one who had spoken earlier and shouted the incantation clearly, stunning the Death Eaters by the act he had done. "AVADA KEDAVRA!" The sickly green curse shot out of his wand and hit the Death Eater leading them. Silence followed his actions as the Death Eaters stared at the body of their dead leader fearfully. Most Aurors did not kill at all. To face one who had the guts to do it was a terrifying proposal to them. Grinning Moorson sent several Explosion Hexes at the Death Eaters. It would serve to warn the other Aurors and do maximum damage to the Death Eaters.

Quickly, the other Aurors seemed to gain the courage to fight again after seeing what he had done. The fight was on. The Gate was not lost. Not yet. Not while there was still a single breath in them. The tides of war were shifting. Let the Battle commence.

Command Tent, Graham's POV...

I sighed wearily as I started briefing the Squad Leaders about the new strategies to be enacted in case of an attack. I hadn't expected

to tell them at night but it seemed I had no choice in the matter. The Ministry had ordered that any new plans concerning the War in Ireland be told to Field Commanders and Squad Leaders immediately rather than risk them being killed beforehand. Suddenly, the sound of rustling made me stop speaking. I listened more carefully and there, another rustling sound. Someone was outside. I quickly drew my wand and cast a silent shield charm in front of me. Just as well to because a few seconds later, several dark cloaked men, or rather, Death Eaters, barged into the room and started firing curses at me. They were quite surprised when their curses hit my shield. I quickly retaliated, sending a quick stunner at one of them. By now, most of the Aurors in the room had reacted by sending a variety of stunners, disarmers, and immobilizers at the twelve Death Eaters. They stood no chance against the onslaught and sheer force of the spells. Clearly the would be assassins hadn't counted on me conducting such a late meeting.

Wasting no time, I began sending out orders to them. If the Death Eaters tried to kill me tonight, then the attack was tonight. "MOVE OUT AND SPREAD THE NEWS OF AN ATTACK! MAN THE BATTLEMENTS! THREE SQUADS ARE TO REINFORCE THE GATES IMMEDIATELY! MOVE!" I yelled as they sprung to life running outside to wake up their squads. I hastily slipped into my Battle Robes and rushed to the gate. If I knew Rookwood like I think I do, that's the first thing he wants out of his way. After all, what better way to overrun a camp than to be allowed entry to one.

Rookwood, Normal POV...

Rookwood grinned as he saw the green sparks which signalled the start of the attack. "BATTLE GROUPS 2 AND 3, BREACH THE WALLS! BATTLE GROUP 1, SECURE THE GATES! BATTLE GROUPS 4 AND 5, FIRE AT WILL AND PROVIDE COVERING FIRE!" He commanded in his Sonorus amplified voice. He had two thousand men with him right now divided into groups of 400 each for a Battle Group. The Aurors had prepared to encounter more men than this. Hopefully it would be enough to break the defensive lines of the Aurors. All he had to hope for now was that the gates held long enough for additional forces to secure the area. Once that was done, Victory would be his.

A Volley of Spells and Curses shot out of the mass of Death Eaters, impacting the sturdy walls of the Aurors and shaking it slightly as some Guards on top of the fortification were blown apart by the intensity of the massive use of Explosion Curses. A Second Volley was fired directly after the first one and succeeded to eliminate even more Aurors on top of the walls. A continuous suppression of the Aurors was achieved by the two Battlegroups by taking turns in firing one after the other.

Meanwhile a slightly bigger mass of dark cloaked wizards charged forward with little fear of being attacked. The Aurors were too few in numbers on the walls currently to launch any sort of attack. They were two meters away from the Gates when blasts of red and green light hit them with full force, instantly killing several hundreds in their tightly packed groups. Those who survived did one of two things. It was either to return fire or run as fast as humanly possible for unfit wizards to their destinations.

From his position of relative safety a few hundred meters back, Rookwood cursed silently to himself. He hadn't expected the Aurors to recover so quickly and effectively. "MEN FIRE AT WILL!" Nearly half of the Death Eaters began firing wildly at the walls, hoping to hit something or rather someone and the clustered up Death Eaters slowly drifted apart to make it harder to get hit by incoming spells.

The remainders of the First Battle Group quickly scrambled, in a highly disorganized manner, to the gates. Their numbers had quickly been reduced to half under the onslaught of spells coming from the defenders. Of course, as soon as the last of them were in, the gates automatically shut behind them with a loud bang. It was the surprising silence there that actually bothered many of the Death Eaters. It was too quiet and devoid of life; friendly and hostile. They slowly walked forward into the camp clearing up ahead. The first ones that stepped into the area first, however, were the first to die. Exploding Hexes made short work of those in front. The fearful Death Eaters found themselves surrounded by a hundred of the more aggressive and previously disillusioned Aurors also known as the ones who would have no qualms about killing them right here, right now. Their

screams for help were cut short by the Aurors. No one who went into the camp that night ever came back out alive.

After several volleys of powerful curses, the earthen walls were rapidly to show signs of breaking. The commanders of both sides knew this as well and anticipated to take maximum advantage of that. "MEN, BREAK DOWN THE WALLS!" Rookwood ordered, as his men cast one last volley of concentrated Exploding Hexes at the wall. The entire construct collapsed under the pressure and the Aurors seemed to have retreated. Rookwood smiled. The Survivors of the Second and Third Battle Groups as well as half of the Fifth Battle Group began charging moving forward into the camp led by Brimshore. They met no Aurors or Militias for that matter as they went deeper and deeper into the camp until they reached the Command Tent in the center where a small line of probably a hundred and fifty Aurors stood, wand poised.

"Commander Graham, I hope you are ready to meet your end." Brimshore said, sneering.

"You will not find us easy prey." Graham said fiercely.

"We shall see about that." Brimshore said, turning to his men, he ordered, "DEATH EATERS, MAKE READY!"

"AURORS FIRE!" The front lines of the Death Eaters fell immediately to the Aurors. The Death Eaters had barely started to open fire when Graham shouted out another order that confused the dark robed wizards enough to momentarily stop firing. This pause cost them the battle. "MILITAS NOW!" Instantly, the tents behind the Death Eaters which had not been checked were flung aside and 200 Militias stood in their place. "FIRE!" Graham yelled quickly as the Militias fired a volley of stunners which tore through the ranks of the Death Eaters, taking out several of them before they had a chance to react. "AURORS FIRE!" This last barrage quickly took care of any Death Eaters which remained.

"MEN, CHARGE!" The Resistance Forces gave a Battle Cry before running towards the last group of Death Eaters.

Rookwood knew when to retreat and cut his losses, though he rarely ever had to. Now was one of those times. There were many things which contributed to how they lost this battle. He had grown overconfident of his skills in warfare. He had underestimated the Aurors' defences, reaction time, and ability to kill without mercy in some of them. Most of all, he had waited too long to launch an attack, allowed his men grow lax, while the Aurors trained on, giving them an edge in battle. "FALL BACK TO THE BEACH!"

...Some people used to ask me why I continued to fight in war. I would always answer the same thing.

I fight for freedom, against the violent oppression the Death Eaters impose upon others. I fight so that others do not have to. So that they can rest easy at night. I fight to protect the innocent, whose blood has been shed by those vile scum. But most of all, I fight for those who fought with me. So they may rest in peace, knowing that their deaths were not in vain. That there are others willing to finish what they had started. And that, is the reason why I fight...

excerpt from: Interview Transcripts of the Prime Papers, Special Correspondant Dan Ramhorn, Guest: Edward Graham...

Chapter 26: Talking and Deals

September 2, 6:04 AM...

Harry finished running his three laps around the lake, panting as he stopped. He turned his eyes to the lake, admiring the beautiful scenery the sunrise had created. "Enjoying the sight Mr. Potter?" A voice behind him asked. Harry jumped around in surprise, drawing his wand as he turned. The face of an amused Dumbledore met him. "Now, now, Mr. Potter, I come in peace. There's no need for wands." Dumbledore said, chuckling.

"Good morning Headmaster, may I ask why you are up so early?" Harry asked politely, pocketing his wand, albeit the politeness was rather forced. He may have disliked the man for his meddlings and interference, but he had not done anything against him so far. It was best not to make more enemies, especially one with as much power as Dumbledore had.

"I could ask you the same thing, Mr. Potter. But to answer your question, I sometimes like to see the sunrise over the lake. A wonderful view that I have come to enjoy over my years as a teacher." Dumbledore said. At least he doesn't outright hate me. Or he's very good at hiding it. Dumbledore thought. He is slightly paranoid by the way he reacted when I startled him. Although not completely unexpected after the ordeal he faced last year with the Mages. Nasty business that was. His pondering was interrupted when a blue and white feathered bird appeared suddenly on Harry's shoulder and bit the boy's ear.

"OUCH! What was that for Hedwig?" Harry asked the bird, glaring at his so called 'familiar'. The Phoenix merely chirped merrily.

"Ah, so this is your Phoenix then. I had been wondering whose it belonged to as it has been interacting with Fawkes for quite some time now. I remember when I was young. Fawkes kept following me around for days on end sometimes. Well, I shan't bother you with an old man's rambling anymore. Good day to you Mr. Potter." Well, this is quite a surprise. The boy has a phoenix, a creature of light. This would make it much harder for the boy to be corrupted by Dark Magic.

A good sign then. Over all, that went rather well, I should say. Dumbledore thought as he was leaving, quite content with himself. As he was leaving, he heard Harry reply.

"Good day to you as well, Headmaster." There was a short pause before he said something else. "OW! Would you stop biting me!" Dumbledore chuckled. Oh, he's in for it now. His phoenix is nearing its final stages of the bonding and will need to be in constant proximity to Harry. This should be fun to watch over breakfast. Hmm, I wonder if Mippy would mind baking up some of her delectable cookies. They are quite good. Butterscotch was the flavor I believe. Hmm, I wonder how he'll cope with classes with the bird distracting him. Well, not like it matters. The boy's advanced for his age so I'm sure he'll cope somehow. I'll just warn the teachers in the meeting later on. As if he could possibly learn anything from Lockhart. I had to hire him because the Ministry and the Board pressured me into doing so. Curse the Board for overriding my hiring authority. Them and their stupid publicity stunts, hiring Lockhart of all the people. I would be of if I got a Troll to teach. Think of how much physical exercise the students would get. And it'd make them quicker to. Bloody Bureaucrats. Especially the undersecretary of Fudge. What Fudge saw in her when he hired her I will never know. And so Dumbledore went of in his merry ways, thinking of what he'd love to do when he finally got his hands on Umbridge. Something about cursing her to Africa and back again. All because she meddled with his hiring of a competent defense teacher.

Breakfast...

Harry sat down next to Draco in the Great Hall, with Hedwig on his shoulder still. The biting had stopped at least and Harry had learned to ignore her for the most part of the day. Of course, this was much harder to do when dozens of people were staring at him, or rather, his shoulder. There were mixed reactions from the various people staring at the bird. Most of the staff ignored its existence. The Slytherins tried to keep their composure and did their best not to look shocked. They were horrible failing at that. The Ravenclaws and Hagrid studied it curiously and some of them did so excitedly even. The Hufflepuffs did

not outright stare though they were tactless in sneaking long glances at it. The Gryffindors under Robert were in a sort of denial and had come up with the explanation that Harry 'binded the bird to himself unwillingly using illegal dark magic'. The not so hardcore followers of his refused to believe that was possible and chose to look at it admiringly instead. The rest either ignored it or looked at it without pause. The former was composed mostly of the Staff and Harry's friends and family. The latter was a surprisingly long list. It could be said that there was a lot of staring and gaping that day. It was probably true.

"So Harry, why's Hedwig on your shoulder?" Drake asked curiously. He was one of the few people who were relatively calm about the phoenix's presence.

"If only I knew, Drake, if only I knew." Came Harry's reply.

"You mean you don't know?" Drake asked, sounding somewhat gleeful.

"Why do I get the feeling that you're happy to hear that?" Harry half said to himself, half asked.

"It's just refreshing to have proof that you don't know everything. That and I'll finally have a moment worthy of being placed in a pensieve." Drake said, smirking.

Harry groaned. "You're never going to let me forget about this are you?"

"Nope." Drake said.

"I thought so." There was a slight pause as Harry began thinking. "Say, what's our first class today?"

"We've got Lockhart I think. Wait, let me go ask Daphne." Drake said. "Hey Daphne, when's our class with Lockhart?"

A dreamy look seemed to fill her eyes as she responded. "We've got Professor Lockhart." She then sighed happily.

Harry watched the proceedings, rather confused as he did so. "Why does she have that look in her eyes whenever someone says the word 'Lockhart'?"

"You just noticed? Apparently, Lockhart's very famous to women and girls. Most of them have crushes on him, I reckon. I wonder if he has some sort of mass Compulsion Charm in use?" Drake asked.

"Nah, it'd be impractical and impossible to do that, let alone hold the charm for hours or even minutes." Harry replied. "And did you notice that she didn't answer your question?"

"Yeah. That always happens. Most girls would be too love struck to answer anything about Lockhart at this point I think." Drake said. "I dread to think of how classes will be."

"Classes? I dread to think how life in Hogwarts for a whole year with that idiot is going to be." Harry said exasperatedly. Drake involuntarily shuddered at the thought. "Anyway, I'm going to class early. Its the only sure way to get a spot at the back of the class. I assume others will feel the need to hide as much as possible from Lockhart as well." Harry said, picking up his bag.

"Wait for me Harry. I'm with you in this." Drake said, hurriedly grabbing his own bag before running to catch up with his friend. It was by some twisted stroke of fate that Lockhart just happened to be passing by the same corridor they were in. Dear God, why are morons attracted to me? Harry thought.

"Ah, Harry, I'd like a word with you." Lockhart said. It was apparent to Harry that his aggressiveness towards the man had not fazed him that much after all.

Harry futilely tried to think of an excuse to not have to speak to the man. Out of desperation, he looked to Draco for help. "Sorry mate, better you than me. I've got places to go, other people to be with. See you later." Drake said.

"Gee, with friends like you, why do I still need enemies?" Harry remarked.

"I don't know. But when you figure it out, be sure to tell me. Besides, Hedwig will keep you company." Drake replied while leaving.

Harry turned to face Lockhart. "You wanted to speak to me, professor?" Harry asked, forcing himself to say the last word.

"How would you like to be my Apprentice?" Lockhart asked.

Harry blinked, slightly bewildered. Well, that was straight forward. Harry thought. "What?" Harry asked blankly.

"I am asking you if you want to be my Apprentice." Lockhart repeated.

"Um...in what? You don't have any credentials such as a Mastery, so to speak, so what could you possibly offer me?"

"Marketing, Publicity Management, and exploiting your fame to maximum potential and effectiveness. You see Harry, I need to pass on my teachings to someone who already has fame or will be having fame soon, and I'm talking about national or international fame here. The person I have chosen, Harry, is you."

"Er...thanks but no thanks. I hate my fame so I'd rather not have to bolster it and make it worse for me."

"Ah, 'tis a shame. How one so young is willing to throw away one of their greatest assets and power in their hand because they do not know how to use it properly." Lockhart said, sighing overdramatically.

"Asset? Power? I doubt it could be a match for true raw magical power." Harry answered, thought he might not admit it, his curiosity had sparked to life.

"You poor naive boy. In history, the famous poeple are always those with most charisma and charm, those who are in the public's good books. There have been people who have lived to be more powerful than Dumbledore and yet, no one knows about them. They might

have had exploits more magnificent...but it wasn't publicized. You cannot hope to be remembered if you have no fame, Harry. So the question now is, do you want to be a mediocre or do you want to be something more? I can help you to become great...and if you play it right, to be even greater than Dumbledore."

Harry thought it over. It was a good offer and the argument he presented was to be taken into consideration. Lockhart saw the uncertainty in Harry's eyes about the proposal. Time to play the wild card. "Listen Harry, Slivenson's greatest strength which you cannot match him in is his fame which has gathered followers to him like fleas to a wild dog. If you accept for me to teach you, I can teach you how to overcome his advantage."

"Before I answer you, tell me this first. What's in it for you and why me?" Harry asked

"Why you? Because you're the top candidate. Slivenson is the other person with fame here but the boy's ambition isn't something that can be easily used to an advantage. What do I get from this? Easy, I get more fame, more influence, and I get contacts from my position to you." Lockhart said.

"Fine, but on three conditions, one, don't even try to alter my memory and I'll have this from you in a vow, two, I want you to humiliate Draco Malfoy for me for this one lesson, and three, are you really a fraud?" Harry asked.

"The first two are agreeable to. And before I answer your question, I want it to be certain that you do not publicize the information to anyone without my permission."

"We'll work out the vows later on. Your answer?" Harry asked impatiently.

"I'm a fraud, in your standards, although I prefer to think of myself as an ambitious opportunist." Lockhart said. "I'll assign a detention to you for today and we'll make the vows then. It has been a pleasure doing business with you, Mr. Potter."

"A pleasure indeed, Professor." Harry replied.

Some time later, a few meters from where they once stood...

"So Harry, what's with the phoenix?"

"Don't ask."

"...Harry Potter is a enigma, I must admit. Prior to his Ascension, he had no training, he was not used to fame, he hated it in fact, and yet, despite all this, he was able to play the public to do his bidding. And they loved him for it. He knew nothing of speeches, social interaction, diplomacy, or even public imagery. And yet, he became one of the greatest leaders of our time..."

-excerpt from: The Prime Paper's Interview Transcripts, Special Correspondant: Michelle Rasper, Guest: Katherine Potter

Chapter 30: Mobilization

Ireland, Graham...

Graham surveyed the land which would soon become a battlefield for his men. He noted every bend in the trail, every rock and tree in his path. He checked the visibility from within the forest to the outside, and likewise with the other side. He would be sending a force through here probably to attack the Death Eater flank while they were busy fighting his main force. He could use this place as a second front or the pathway to their base to stop their escape to the sea. This terrain offered him an unlimited amount of tactical strategies employable, each one with its strength and weaknesses. He had a numerical superiority now, however slight it was. He could afford to take risks that no normal strategists would dream of doing. But Rookwood was no normal Strategists. He would be able to counter his attempts well enough. So in the end, it would all boil down to who had the guts to do what was needed and how quickly could they decide what they needed to do. It would be a game between the two of them, a battle of the wits.

He still remembered his teachers old motto. No plan survives contact with the enemy.

Fear not my fallen comrades, your deaths shall not be in vain. I will bring an end to the tyrannical rule of the Death Eaters one way or another! I shall fall before I consider letting Ireland fall to their hands. I will not abandon my people to their mercy and cruelty. This I swear. I will not stop fighting them until the last Death Eater is dead before me or I have fallen before them. To my last breathe, I pledge to fight for the innocent and the oppressed, I will not let their sacrifice be wasted.

I will prevail in the end. I will not rest, I will not stop, I will not surrender, I will not retreat until I have won this war.

Victory at all costs.

Rookwood...

The Death Eater Commander was looked down upon the his men's camp. Most of them would die in the upcoming conflict and he felt a sense of regret. Despite what most people thought, he was not a heartless creature that had no emotions. He felt compassion for his comrades, sympathy to those who were suffering, and regret for those who had died. They had died for ideals of a noble cause, the cause of social reorganization and reformation of a corrupt government, so inefficient they turned on themselves.

He felt regret mainly because he felt that the youths who had been swayed to their side and died for his cause, their cause, could have led better lives. They could have had a family, job, maybe even attained greatness in the world. And yet, they threw it all away for the sake of one thing.

The cause.

They bled and died for something they could not see or touch. But they died all the same, willing and loyal. It was for this reason Rookwood refused to surrender, even against all odds. even if the world turned on him, as long as a single man, woman, or child still believed in him, trusted him to do his duty, and put their lives in his hands, he would continue fighting. Not for his sake or some damn ideals of a lunatic long dead, but for the people who had sacrificed themselves. He would continue fighting for them and not for anything else. He was a leader and a shepherd, and his people were his flock.

As long as a single man trusts in me, I will not give in, even if the world is against me, I will find a way to prevail. For there is nothing more important than the loyalty of your people and the determination of their leader.

No retreat, no surrender. Victory at all costs.

Hogwarts, Great Hall...

Jonathan Morris gazed upon the men of Christopher with a critical eye. There were even fewer than the last time he had seen them.

That was a good sign. Soon, very soon, my time to strike will come. He turned his gaze away from them. They will pay dearly for what they have done. And that Potter brat will too. As soon as my men return, I can strike again. But perhaps I should consider an alliance with another group, an outside factor to give me an edge. No matter, in the end, I will win. I have always won. I don't plan on changing that. He thought.

He left from the hall with his men, avoiding an open confrontation. All my enemies shall fall before me. They do not have a choice. It is my fate to be triumphant over all who oppose me. It is my destiny. I never wanted this conflict, I was forced onto it. Mitch refused to surrender, he had to be replaced. He had grown stagnant and dictatorial, the very thing we had strived to be against. If there is anything I hate in the world, it is a hypocrite and a traitor. More so then the incompetent for at least they would remain loyal. Mitch shall fall and his followers shall scatter before me.

No retreat, no surrender. Victory at all costs.

Robert Slivenson...

Slivenson glared disdainfully at the laughing figure of one Harry James Potter. He will pay for humiliating me. For too long I've tolerated his utter lack of respect for my family and my name. It ends this year. He will suffer the unimaginable and bear the unbearable. Only then will I be satisfied with victory. I will prevail because I am the Chosen One. I am the boy-who-lived. I am my own and no one can tell me otherwise. I will not let some upstart get the better of me. Slivenson clenched his fist in anger. He will crash and burn against me.

No retreat, no surrender. Victory at all costs.

Artrom Gaithe...

Artrom Gaithe was a newly appointed Guardian, transferred from the Elites. He had been given the task, no, honor, of keeping watch over the Heir. He would be the only one standing in the way between harm and the heir. He would not fail. He could not fail. The future of his country demanded his success. He was loyal to the Heir and he would not be bribed like politicians. He was trained to survive the harshest of conditions, he could continue keeping watch for three days and three nights if need be. Through rain, fog, hail, and sleet he would prevail.

He would not compromise for anything. His Lord would not fall, not today, not while he still had breathe in him. Finally after years, there was hope in him. He would not let that feeling go without a fight. He knew that if he fell in battle, he would be honored and dozens more would come to take his place. But not yet. He had not fallen to the enemy. It was not time to pass the torch. He was still the guard.

No compromise. No surrender, no retreat. Victory at all cost.

Azkaban...

The freezing wind swept through the walls, passing by the lightly clad figure standing guard over the walls. He felt an involuntary shiver down his spine. No matter how many years you lived in these conditions, you would never get used to it. The man's name was William Crade. He had been a guard in Azkaban for years now. Suddenly, unearthly screams were heard, breaking the gloomy silence that normally dominated the atmosphere. The screams continued on for some time.

The dementors are feeding again. William thought sadly. No matter what any politician said or how they said it, feeding would always be inhumane in his eyes. No one, not even criminals deserved that. It was a fate worse than death. Those creatures, quite literally, destroyed your soul, incinerating it to serve as energy for them. They tore apart your very sanity and destroyed whatever innocence you might have. They were foul creatures, said to have escaped form Hell itself. Terrifying demons cloaked in black robes, the Soul Stealers they were called. And rightly so.

"Sir?" A young voice behind him asked. William smiled at the title. He was barely thirty years old and yet he was already considered a veteran.

"You were sent there by command to relieve me I presume?" William asked.

"Yes sir." The young man said nervously.

"What's your name lad?"

"James Yive sir."

"Keep your wand about you James. And steer clear of any dementors you see. Those fiends will suck your soul for any excuses and at any chance. Just because they're supposedly our 'allies' doesn't mean they aren't back stabbing demons. Those things have 'accidentally' killed of more men than prisoners, disease, cold, old age, ad any other reason you can think of put together. They're dangerous they are. Don't turn your back on them for a moment." William left the boy and took a few steps forward until he heard a thud behind him.

He turned around to see James dead on the floor, blood pooling around where he had fallen. A knife was stuck in his throat. He looked up and saw two men robed in black, most likely for camouflage purposes, armed with daggers and short knives.

"Don't move. You are trespassing Ministry Territory." William said, growling dangerously as he pulled out his wand, a spell at the tip of his tongue. The two intruders seemed amused by his gesture.

One of them suddenly charged at him with speeds incredible for a wizard. "STUPEFY!" The red stream of light streaked into the air between them. The assassin brought up both of his blades to block the spell, deflecting it back uselessly towards a wall. The intruder continued his charge, not stopping for anything, and in a moment, he had reached William's position.

Before William could speak, so startled as he was, a knife found itself in his throat and a second one in his stomach, effectively killing him and stopping him from making a sound or raising an alarm. The two intruders sent down ropes down the walls, giving twenty Infiltrators access to Azkaban. They were a group specially trained for breaking in and escaping. Whether to kill, rescue, or retrieve, they were the best among the Death Eaters.

The storming would commence. The mission to rescue some of the Dark Lord's most prized warriors.

No compromise, Victory at all costs.

Chapter 28: Planning for the future

Christopher Mitch...

Christopher Mitch, also known as the leader of the “pacifist” Mages of Anima, was currently walking down an abandoned hallway with the remnants of his men. They had received a message from Morris that he wanted to ‘talk’ with them in the hopes of ‘reconciliation’. Of course, only a fool would dare to go to this ‘talk’ by themselves and Mitch was no fool. Even so, if this did turn out to be an ambush, they’d stand no chance of victory against superior numbers armed with the element of surprise.

They could, however, inflict a heavy toll on the attackers, giving themselves a chance to escape using unmatched coordination and training to their advantage by synergizing their effort for maximum effect. It was, after all, what made them a fearsome force in the eyes of many. Few people could show the amount of teamwork they did.

Mitch signaled to his comrades to spread out and stay alert. Several put invisibility charms on themselves. “When I asked you to come and talk, I didn’t think you’d bring an army with you.” A voice from the shadows said.

“The numbers I brought can hardly be compared to the amount of men at your disposal, Morris.” Mitch replied vehemently.

“True. But we just came to talk. There’s no need for hostilities.” Morris replied, stepping out of the shadows calmly.

“Fine. So talk then.” Mitch said briskly.

“Very well. As of now, you have, what, ten people at our disposal? Maybe fifteen at best. While I have a formidable twenty-eight strong ready and willing. That is twice your men number easily. The rest of my men that have been captured will return soon from the mounting pressure of the Alumni and my ranks will be bolstered. You cannot hope to win a fight where you are outnumbered five to one.”

“Is there a point to this?” Morris said coolly. He was disturbed, however, by the prospect of the Mages returning. If that happened, all would be for naught. But he would not give his enemy the satisfaction of seeing him psyched out.

Morris frowned at the lack of reaction from Mitch but continued nonetheless. “This conflict has torn apart our brotherhood physically and emotionally. It has scarred us all. So why let this continue? It is a simple matter. The root of the problem is the argument we had over the inaction against the Potter’s attack and indirectly, over this organization’s tradition. I propose that we restart our mercenary status for those who are willing to participate, but it does not become mandatory”

Mitch thought it through. It was a sound suggestion. Very well thought out. But very, very easy to interpret the hidden meaning of such a thing. “Do you think of me as a fool Morris? Such a deal would cause the pacifistic Mages to be involved when parties attacked by the Mercenaries retaliate. It would be a disaster.”

“That is merely a minor inconvenience. Besides, we could always centralize our bases to make them more defendable.” Mitch said.

“Then, there is also a matter of leadership. I am well aware that your men will not accept this deal unless you become the new leader in fear of my retaliation. My men will not accept you as their leader either. So we come at yet another dilemma. This deal of yours simply cannot mend the rift between our two groups. We will take our leave, Morris.” Mitch signaled to his men to leave.

“I’m afraid you have no choice in the matter Mitch. If you will not accept the bargain with me as the leader, then we will force you to. Men, Attack!” A multicolored barrage of spell fire came out of the shadows around them and approached the group rapidly. Morris grinned as he saw Mitch and his men stand helplessly in the face of the oncoming assault. Five men could hardly block the force of this barrage. The spells suddenly disappeared as a ripple in the air was seen. Morris frowned at the sight. A shield? But how?

“FIRE! Simultaneously, nine men cancelled out their invisibility charms and sent large shockwaves throughout the ground while others began picking the enemies off with accurate fire. Over a dozen men were down out of the twenty eight they had to fight. Nearly half of my men. Morris thought worriedly. He quickly burst into action, taking out his wand and blasting a nearby enemy Mage. He scanned the hallway with his eyes, calculating the most likely ending of the battle, and he didn't like the results of it. Victory, but at the cost of my men; success at the cost of my comrades. He knocked out another Mage with his fist and engaged a third in a duel. All around him, he could hear his men battling against Mitch's men, valiantly, but futilely. Their advantage of numbers was lost and the experience and training of Mitch's faction was starting to take a toll on them.

The sound of footsteps echoed through the hall, stopping the fight temporarily. Mitch and Morris glanced at each other and nodded, an understanding reached. It was time to retreat for now. They would finish this later. “Men disperse.” Morris ordered as his men quickly scattered and disappeared. The same happened with the other group. A few minutes later, the only thing Filch found was a corridor devoid of life.

September 3, Breakfast, Hogwarts...

Death Eater Elites Broken Out of Azkaban!

By Alan McDervis

Yesterday night, A group of twenty or so Death Eaters coming from Ireland were reported to infiltrate Azkaban. Reports from the Guards on duty indicate that most of them had Polyjuice potion or were Metamorphagi allowing them to impersonate the few Aurors they killed. The bodies of said Aurors were found on the eastern wall hours after the breakout, horribly mutilated by what seems like a hatchet. Survivors who encountered these deadly assassins say that they used primarily knives and daggers to neutralize Aurors. They were said to move closely to unsuspecting Guards and quickly stab their throats.

The Escapees from the prison reported so far are: Bellatrix Lestrangle, Rodolphus Lestrangle, Rabastan Lestrangle, Amycus Carrow, Alecko Carrow, and Alexei Grastovi. Thanks to the brave efforts of a group of Aurors, the Death Eaters were stopped from freeing any other prisoners.

The Ministry has said that they are confident that the Aurors will be able to find these convicts within the month and successfully detain them. Though this reporter doubts that they'll be successful as it is most likely that these fugitives join up with the Death Eater force hiding in Ireland...

Harry read the article with a frown. According to Percival, the War in Ireland had turned in favor of the Aurors, but with this latest mishap, the Death Eaters might regain their momentum. This was bad. Hopefully, the new Auror Commander, Graham was his name I think, can contain the situation before it gets out of hand. I wonder when the Ministry is going to release the news about the war? It has been months since the fighting started. Harry mused.

Magic suddenly charged up the air around Harry for a second before it dissipated. Harry looked down at the table to find a note in the place of his newspaper. Odd, who would send me a note? It read:

Potter,

We need to talk. We will contact you tonight at your dorms.

Hmm, Lockhart probably sent this letter. After all, he might have something to teach me tonight though we haven't really worked out a schedule yet. I guess I'll find out tonight.

Ireland, Auror Command Tent...

Graham cursed for the umpteenth time that hour. He had just read today's headlines. We ask them to protect the mainland for a few weeks and they can't even do that properly. This war has finally reached the turning point then things like this happens. If those blasted Death Eaters decide to join the force here, Rookwood is

armed with a small, but extremely versatile and dangerous force of possible commanders.

If they don't decide to join, they might start their own rebellion further in land causing the Ministry to pull out men from my command. And in the unlikely case that they don't do either of the aforementioned, the Ministry will still take men from my command to search for these fugitives. Damn It! How did things get so complicated for me?

Graham's fuming was interrupted abruptly by the entering of his second in command, Kyla Staples. "Sir." She saluted.

"I trust you've read this morning news, Kyla?"

She hesitated for a moment before answering. "Yes Sir."

"Good, then there's no need for me to explain to you about the change of plans." Graham said, pulling out a map of the area. "We are positioned here, three miles away from the Death Eaters. Within the hour, we suspect that they will begin falling back to the other side of the Lough Neagh via mass ships. The Ministry's Rear Attack during the Double Pincer Maneuver has failed completely, therefore we are back to how we were a few weeks ago.

You will be directing a force of a hundred Aurors to sabotage their escape route and capture or kill their leader, Augustus Rookwood. In order to allow you time to do so, we will be attacking ten minutes before your operation begins to distract them. Rookwood will most probably retreat as soon as we attack so you must move quickly to destroy their ships. Understood?"

"Yes Sir." She answered curtly.

"Good Luck. Dismissed." Graham said, saluting. She saluted back and left to prepare for her new mission. I just hope they can pull this off.

Rookwood...

Rookwood smiled as he heard the news. Excellent, with the others now free, the Ministry will be hard pressed to fight a war on multiple fronts. If things go according to plan, the Lestranges will begin recruiting in Scotland and the Carrows and Grastovi in Wales. With some luck, they'll each have a force of fifty men in a week, more than enough for the hit and run missions they'll be doing. All I need to do now is protect my holdings here from attacks. He thought.

Rookwood turned his gaze upon his force of men that survived from the assault. Five Hundred Strong, barely a quarter of his initial assault force. If the Auror Commander was as smart as he thought he was, he would begin attacking soon while they were weakened and outnumbered nearly two to one. That was why they were beginning evacuations ASAP. They had to get out of hostile territory quickly or risk being crushed. If they stayed, they could be virtually surrounded with their backs to the lake with little hope of reinforcements due to the fact that the Rear Counteroffensive of the Aurors during the siege had killed off some of his leaders and had left his men and forces in disarray. All they could hope for now was that they didn't drown during the trip.

"...Despite the fact that Magical Transportation has improved greatly in the past few centuries, Naval Transport has still remained greatly undeveloped staying with small transports like that used by Hogwarts for most Naval transportation. However, there are several states which still have some large battleships kept in storage from the 15th Century but are largely outdated. Durmstrung remains the only school in the world to use such a ship for transportation of students en masse..."

-excerpt from: Transportation Through the Ages: What's Changed in our World, by Daniel Whitmore

Chapter 29: Fight and Flight

Ireland...

Auror Edward Graham stood upon a small hill that overlooked the Death Eaters encampment. Behind him stood a thousand strong, the bulk of his forces waiting for orders. The Death Eaters had formed up several hundred meters in front of their encampment, deciding to fight the Aurors in the open with minimal defenses instead of within their base where their food supply and transportation could be jeopardized almost immediately.

"So, what's the plan Graham?" A gruff man, maybe 30 of age, beside him asked.

"Well, if Kyla's going to stand a chance inside that base, we'll need to draw them out even more."

"Draw out even more than this?" The man asked exasperatedly, waving his hands at the Death Eaters.

"Darius, Kyla's men are outnumbered two to one still, and by the Elites of Rookwood no less. She doesn't stand chance as it is." Darius was an one of his batchmates from the Auror Academy. He had been recently transferred to Ireland, and indirectly, under his command.

"Well then how do you propose we draw them out even more?" Darius asked.

"That's the tricky part. We'd have to make a seemingly good excuse that Rookwood will believe as to why we cannot charge at their encampment at full strength, but rather only three-fourths of our men. If Rookwood believes that by sending reinforcements, he can push our assaulting force back from his forward encampment and inflict a heavy toll on us, he will empty his base."

"We could surround him on all sides and push forward slowly." Darius suggested.

"It might pressure him to call for an immediate evacuation, though incomplete, will still ruin our plans. That cannot happen until Kyla has finished her mission. Otherwise, we risk putting her in jeopardy. And we cannot allow that if we want to have a chance at capturing Rookwood."

"Hmm, then maybe a concentrated two-front assault would be best with a third front in the distance, ready to provide immediate support." Darius said, scratching his chin.

"Perhaps, perhaps. But would it be tempting enough in light of the crushing defeat we inflicted upon him? He might have become more paranoid."

"Trust me Graham, it will be enough. I know how Rookwood thinks. After all, he used to be my Apprentice in Strategic Combat." Darius' eyes flashed dangerously as he said the last part. "After all, a divided Auror force is too tempting a target to pass upon for him. Especially now when he's cornered. He needs a victory to strengthen the will and determination of his men to fight. Otherwise, he has already lost. And he knows it too."

"Alright. We'll proceed as you suggest. But with a slight alteration. The third group on standby you suggested will be split into two. The first will provide ready support to our main battle group while the second one will be providing support for Kyla's team during their escape. You will be in charge of this group Darius. I don't want you to do anything rash against Rookwood. Understood?" Graham asked.

"Yes sir." Darius said, gritting his teeth.

Sighing, Graham continued. "Listen, I know you hold a grudge against him dishonoring you and what not but you mustn't let emotions get in the way of our mission. Not when we are so close to achieving victory. You will have your vengeance on Rookwood once this war is over, I assure you, but right now I need you to focus. Can you do that?" Graham asked.

"Yes." Darius replied.

“Good. Inform the Squad Leaders of the new plan. We move out in an hour.” He commanded, walking away from his subordinate and friend.

Rookwood...

Rookwood silently watched his men preparing themselves for battle with some sense of sadness and regret. Despite what most people thought of him, he was not some monster who did not know how to care or could not feel guilt. Most of his men with him now would probably die unless O’Loughlin somehow managed to bring in reinforcements from the other side, and that was extremely unlikely. It was his fault that they would die today. They had put their trust in him that he would lead them to victory, and he had failed them.

But this new Auror Commander...this man bothered him even more. If they were to have a chance at bringing the Dark Lord back to life, he would have to be eliminated first. Rookwood doubted if he could kill the Auror himself. He would also be a nuisance to their plans when the Dark Lord was amongst them again, being able to counter their plans quickly and effectively, destroying any edge they might attain momentarily. It was...unnerving to see someone who could react so quickly in virtually any situation. Graham was a threat to his superiority. One that needed to be eliminated, or be eliminated by it.

Graham...

“Graham, the lads are ready to move. They await your orders.” Darius said.

“Very well. Let’s end this war.” Graham said. “Send out the signal.” Red sparks shot up into the air from Darius’ wand.

Turning to his men, Graham said. “Men, today is a glorious day for us all. Today, we destroy the leader of the Death Eaters here. You are part of something that will be remembered forever. Today, we will be the victors! As we speak now, our comrades wait for us to attack the Death Eaters on the other side. Together, we will drive out these scum from our lands and crush them! You shall have your revenge at last!” Cheers rose from the ranks of his men as Graham turned to Darius.

“Have them initiate Field Maneuver Eighteen.”

“Yes sir.” Darius said, saluting.

Kyla...

So far so good. Kyla thought to herself as her men were halfway through with destroying the ships. It had been an hour since the battle began and the Aurors were steadily gaining ground, forcing Rookwood to send more and more Death Eaters out of the base to reinforce his forward encampment. Those few who remained were busy patrolling the outskirts of the camp, too far to hear or see them here in the docks.

Although why the Death Eaters would not post Guards in the docks at all bothered her slightly. On one hand, it allowed them to swim into the base; on the other hand, it gave her a feeling that this was a trap of some sort. But that's impossible. We weeded out all the spies in our ranks days ago! She thought. Still, it would be naïve to think that Rookwood hadn't found other ways to get information on our plans. He values that far too much.

“Is something wrong Mam?” An Auror asked her, interrupting her musing.

“No, it's nothing. What do you want?” She asked.

“I was sent to inform you that all the ships have been sabotaged. If anyone tries to ride them, they'll sink to the bottom of the lake where the Colossal Squids in the lake will most likely eat them. If they get back to shore, we'll be here to catch them. I seriously doubt any of these Death Eaters now how to swim well enough to get to the other side of the lake.” He said.

“Good work. Let's pack up and get out of here.” Kyla said.

“Yes M-” He was cut short by Kyla who pushed him to the ground, causing him to narrowly miss a sickly green spell.

“GET DOWN! WE’VE BEEN SPOTTED!” She shouted. Aurors all around her began raising shields and barriers to stop the sudden onslaught of spells being fired at them, but it was a moment too late. Several Aurors were knocked out before their shields could form and the few that were able to raise them in time were separated and surrounded.

“Surrender Aurors, and we might let you live.”

“Death Eaters don’t know the meaning of mercy.” Kyla spat out vehemently.

“Very well, Aurors, if that is your choice. Kill Them.” The Death Eater said to his men. Dozens of slicing spells whizzed through the air, threatening to shred anyone foolish enough to remain in its path.

“SHIELDS!” A line of shields appeared before the Aurors, though poorly conjured one for the most part because of the weakened state of the Aurors. As expected, the spells easily smashed through, though the shields served their purpose to weaken the spells’ effects resulting in nothing more than small scratches and cuts along their arms.

“FIRE!” A round of exploding curses made short work of the Aurors, effectively crippling them. The Aurors stood no chance in their weakened state.

“Take them to the holding cells. Commander Rookwood will be pleased with these bargaining chips.” The Death Eater in command said. The Death Eaters quickly restrained the helpless Aurors magically and physically.

We have been taken.

Graham...

Strange, she was supposed to send out a Signal Spell by now. Graham thought. The battle before him was going according to plan with Rookwood now committing more and more forces into battle just to keep up with their assault force. If he retreated now, he

condemned his men to death or incarceration. The two fronts that Rookwood was facing now turned to their advantage. With his forces fighting back to back, they were slowly encircling them, wearing out the Death Eaters ranks by expanding the battlefield. The third flank in reserve helped in stopping the Death Eaters from breaking out.

However, the fourth flank was still waiting for the signal to move in and create a distraction in the base. Without the signal, they had no sure way of knowing if the ships had been sabotaged yet. And if the job had not yet been completed, Rookwood would be able to escape again. Not to mention Kyla and the others would be compromised. That was unacceptable.

On the other hand, there was always a chance that Kyla had been spotted and captured. If that had happened, then sending the group in would save their lives but in the process, also give Rookwood a chance to escape. It was slightly more acceptable if they were indeed captured. If being the keyword. They could be certain of nothing. It was times like this that made Graham hate being a Commander. And yet somebody had to do it.

Making up his mind, he sent out a white stream of light from his wand. The message that the color represented was clear. Advance to the base. All Aurors, attack.

Rookwood...

"Hmm, sabotaged you say? No matter, the ships were merely a luxury. Have the men fallback and begin the evacuation. And hand out those portkeys. As for the prisoners, leave them be. We do not have the manpower to waste on them. But kill the survivors if you find some extra time on your hands. No need to give Graham back his dogs." Rookwood said.

"Yes sir."

"Oh and Captain, have the Warders on standby. The moment we reach the outskirts of the wards, I want the portkeys activated immediately."

“Of course, sir.”

8:00 PM Hogwarts...

“An Alliance? Between us? Against Morris? I thought he was your friend.” Harry said.

“That was true until he betrayed me. Me and my men can’t hope to win decisively without your help. Especially now that Morris is planning on allying himself with Slivenson. Together, they’d be unstoppable to any one force in this entire school. Our only hope is to band together against them. Less we be crushed.” Mitch said.

“I will have to think about this.”

“Very well. But tell us when you decide. Time is crucial.”

Chapter 30: The New Menace

Hogwarts, September 10

“Percy, what do you have to report?” Harry asked cordially.

“From what I’ve gathered from my dad’s ministry friends, the Minister had been urged strongly not to inform Malfoy of the activities in Ireland. They believe that Malfoy would start financing them. Cornelius may be corrupt of all things but he’s not as stupid as we first thought. They still believe that, if push comes to shove, Malfoy will side with the Death Eaters.” Percy said.

“Hmm, the new Commander of the Aurors must be quite good to have survived until now.” Harry said.

“That’s what the Ministry thinks as well. So much is their faith in his skills that they have began pressuring the Minister to order an attack against the Death Eaters. Unfortunately, in an attack last week, several veteran Aurors were captured. They are still bargaining for the Auror’s return and until then, the Minister and the Auror Commander refuse to attack.”

“Well, this is the first time I’ve heard of the Ministry bargaining for prisoners.”

“That’s because this is the first time the Ministry was dealing with Death Eaters not led by Voldemort. Rookwood has more compassion than that monster.”

“I doubt anyone is less humane than Voldemort.” Harry said.

“Good point. Anyways, Slivenson seems awfully quiet. I would have expected that he had come over to invoke your ire by now.”

“I’ve been wondering about that as well. He has been a bit...strange lately. Perhaps it has something to do with the Mages? Last I heard from him was when we agreed to make the deal. Anyways, I must have a word with my brother soon. He’s been so busy lately I hardly ever get a chance to speak to him anymore.”

“Yes, I see. Alex has been rather busy this year, more so than usual. I suppose it would be because of the OWLs. Don’t worry about it. It’s natural for him to have no time for anything else but school related things. I know I had none when I was going through my OWLs.”

“Perhaps your right. I guess I’ll have to make a choice without his aid.”

“So how’s the restaurant doing” Percy said.

“It is doing fine. My assistant there reports a huge increase in profits these last few months. And to think people used to say it would never work. A ludicrous statement now!”

“I must admit, Harry, that even I did not expect it to be such a major success amongst the purebloods, of all the people.”

“Decades of deprivation from luxuries that my delicatessen sells will cause them to change even the staunchest pureblood’s opinion. Once one of them started eating there, the rest followed slowly, but surely. It is an example of their sheep mentality.” Harry said.

Elsewhere in the Castle...

Perhaps provoking a two front war on both Potter and Mitch. My association with Slivenson alone has condemned me in the eyes of the Potters. Slivenson was not the best ally of choice I could have, but with the Potters getting stronger in the Wizengamot, I will need his help to maintain our political shield. Morris thought.

This new store Potter has made is disturbing news. The purebloods have already started supporting it with the half-bloods. It will give them the much needed income they have to continuously supply Mitch and his men for the coming battles... if they chose to, that is. I doubt I could keep up with that level of logistics, even my advantage of numbers wouldn’t be enough. A war of attrition would be disastrous.

Hopefully, Alex Potter will be too busy studying to actively work against us. He would be a terrifying foe to fight against. Especially

when he used to be the candidate of choice for being a Mage. Leader of his batch, that was what we thought he would be. With most of the Senior Mages graduating this year and recruitment at an all time low, I doubt there would still be Mages in a few years time. This has to end. Soon.

Ministry, Wizengamot Chambers...

"Very well, Lord Nott, we will consider your proposition. The Wizengamot will adjourn for lunch." Fudge said, banging his. He stood up, dusting his robes as he did.

"Minister, a word if you will." A voice behind him said.

Fudge turned around, startled to see Lord Slivenson. "Of course, Lord Slivenson. We may speak over lunch." He replied promptly.

"Very well, Minister Fudge. We will be eating at Europe's Finest I suppose?" Slivenson asked.

"As you wish, Lord Slivenson." Fudge said, pulling out a portkey that would take them to Diagon Alley. "Power in Magic." The portkey activated, almost instantly transporting them through space to their desired destination. They took a moment to recover from the inertial shock that would always be felt no matter how used the body was to instant travel. Magic, no matter in whose hands, could never solve all their problem. The pair strode past the wooden doors of the restaurant, looking forward to a splendid meal.

Inside, the restaurant was packed with people. Business was still going strong, it seemed. A house elf quickly came to the two. "Please follow me sirs. We have a table for you ready." The elf waiter said, leading them to a table. One or two free tables were usually reserved for any unexpected visit from important purebloods in most restaurants. "Wills I be taking your orders now sirs?"

"Maybe later elf." Slivenson said, shooing it away subtly.

"Yes sirs." The elf vanished with a pop.

"Now Minister, we have matters of mutual interest to discuss. I know of your...difficult situation in the Wizengamot. I am willing to help you out in that matter. Tell me what do you know about the informal Potter-Malfoy Front being formed in Hogwarts?"

"The offspring of these two families have struck up a friendship; more specifically, Draco Malfoy and Harry Potter. This has led to better relations between the two great families. Or at least, that's what it seems like. There are rumors within the Wizengamot that they have begun forming a coalition of their own, breaking off from Dumbledore's."

"Yes, you are correct. However, if they do go through with this, they will form a group that would be unmatched amongst the Wizengamot. They would be the dominating faction. If this happens, then we will all be doomed. Both of those families despise me and you. Dumbledore, well, I'm afraid he wouldn't exactly go against them both without our support. Between the three of us we could manage to neutralize the threat they pose." He took a deep breathe before continuing. "This brings us to why I wanted to talk to you. I'm asking for your support against them."

This is a tempting offer indeed. Here is Slivenson now, practically begging for my support. "Suppose I accept this offer of yours, what benefits would I receive?" Fudge said.

"Well for starters, I could be very generous to you in funding your projects. I've heard that the Ministry has been experiencing some monetary problems. Second, I could bolster the public in favor of you. The elections are in a year. Without proper support, your party would be hopeless. I can provide you with that support. There are plenty of things I could offer you. And all you must do is pledge your allegiance to me."

"Very well...Lord Slivenson. I will join you in two conditions. You will swear to fulfill your promises to me. Second, you will insure that Dumbledore joins us as well, or at least stays neutral in this."

"Your terms are acceptable." Let a new order rise from the ashes of the Potters.

Ionos, Montfortal Training Grounds...

"Well done men. We will resume training after lunch. You're dismissed." Faren, the commander of the Dragon Guards, said. It had been more or less a week since the Guardians had been formed and their training was well under way. The men were doing better than they expected in their physical training. The temporary wands they had were inefficient and created problems in the men's spell casting. But at least they had wands.

The Heir wouldn't be completely defenseless now. It wasn't what they wanted, but they had no choice.

"They're improving rapidly in their swordsmanship training Faren. Perhaps you missed your true calling as a teacher."

"I doubt that their improvement in the arts has anything to do with the quality of which I teach, Lord Rigan." Faren said, turning around. "More likely it is because of their vigor and passion to protect the Heir."

"Nonetheless, without a proper teacher, most of that energy would go to waste, unguided as it might be." The old man said.

"Maybe so. Do you have any news from the Council?"

"Unfortunately so. The Council has denied our request for additional funds under the guise of the Dragon Elites requiring more wands. Commander Sinther is most annoyed with this. He'd normally send the Dragon Elites to guard the Heir instead, but he suspects spies within his ranks."

"We'll have to make do with what we have then. I'll have to recall two of the active Guardians too speed up the training process. Certain individuals have shown great promise. We could probably get about another five in the field by the end of the month if we manage their training correctly." Faren declared.

“Excellent. I will begin preparations for their equipment. Hopefully, Hyde will not be able to stop our movement when he leaves for Lithos Island next week. His coalition would crumble like sand without him.”

“I will eagerly wait for the supplies then, Council Lord.”

“Farewell, old friend. We will meet again soon.”

“Good day sir.” Rigan saluted.

Hogwarts...

“I’m telling you Drake, there is no way that I ma going to join Quidditch again. My mind is made up.” Harry said.

“Oh come on Harry. Quidditch is in your blood! There’s no way I’m going to let your talent go to waste!” Draco said.

“You’re never going to convince him Drake. Once his minds made up, his will is like steel.” Neville said.

“Not helping Neville.” Drake said, gritting his teeth.

“You should listen to him Drake. His words are filled with wisdom. So forget about it. I am not joining a Quidditch team this year.” Harry said slowly, making sure to emphasize every word.

“I refuse to accept your decision. I-” Drake was cut off by Harry who put a finger to his lips.

“What is it Harry?” Neville said, lowering his voice.

“I hear something from up ahead. It sounds like...water.” Harry said.

“Water? Really Harry, how is water supposed to harm us? Don’t be such a pessimist.” Drake said, walking past him. He suddenly stopped dead in his tracks at the intersection.

“Hey Drake, why’d you stop?” Neville asked, catching up with Harry.

"Is that what you heard Harry?" Drake said, pointing to something up ahead.

Harry turned to where Drake had pointed. The sight which he saw chilled him to the core. Peeves' ghost body was shredded to pieces. Beside him was a young female Ravenclaw student, near dead with similar cuts and scratches along his body. Both were seemingly unconscious. Harry knelt down beside the Ravenclaw. He touched a pool of blood beside her. "This blood...it's warm and fresh. Whatever did this...is still nearby." Harry stated as he took out a Blood Clotting Solution from his bag. "This should stop the bleeding for a while." He poured the potion onto the girl's wounds.

"What kind of a thing could do this? More importantly, how could a thing that dangerous get in here without Dumbledore's knowledge." Neville asked worriedly, bringing his wand to his side in case anything unsuspected happened.

"I don't know the answer to any of your questions. But what I do know is that this girl needs to be brought to Madame Pomfrey ASAP." Harry said. "Drake, help me levitate her. Neville, keep an eye out for anything that seems remotely weird. Come on let's move. Time is of the essence."

"WINGARDIUM LEVIOSA!" Drake and Harry shouted, lifting up the body of the girl. The party hastily made their way to the Infirmary, surprisingly without encountering anyone.

Once inside the Hospital Wing, they dropped her body onto one of the beds. "Madame Pomfrey we have an emergency!" Neville yelled.

Madame Pomfrey came out of her office, rather annoyed. "What is this-" She stopped speaking as she saw the body of the girl. "Who did this?" She asked as she frantically started gathering potions.

"We don't know. We saw her like this on the floor as we were walking back from dinner. She was on the third floor near the Defense Against the Dark Arts Class. Peeves was with her." Drake replied.

“I need you three to go to my Floo and summon the Headmaster and the Head of Houses. I’ll take care of her.”

Chapter 31: The Shadow's Descent

Half an hour later...

Pomfrey wiped of some sweat from her brow. "This student, Luna Lovegood is her name I believe, was found wounded. Normally, I'd wait for sometime to tell you since this wouldn't be considered 'serious' considering Magical Potions could fix her up in a jiffy. Here comes the interesting part. These wounds, while treatable by muggle means, are unlike anything I've ever seen before. They contain some sort of magical element that stops most magical cures from taking any effect. The Blood Clotting Potion seems to be able to stop the bleeding temporarily, but the effects are considerably weakened. I have to reapply the potion every ten minutes or so." She stopped to apply another potion on the wounds.

"More seriously, some of these gashes on her chest and stomach are deep enough to do some serious damage to intestines. And I'd find it hard to believe she took no damage to her organs as well. A ghost was also found injured similarly near her. I'd imagine this to be a dangerous creature if it could harm a ghost." She concluded.

"Where are the witnesses now?" Dumbledore asked.

"They're in my office waiting for you." Pomfrey replied.

"Thank you Poppy. I'll leave this student in your very capable hands. I shall be taking Mr. Potter and his friends to my office, if you don't mind."

"Not at all, Albus, though I'd appreciate it if you could send Severus to help me. I could use a hand." Pomfrey requested.

"I shall see what I can do." Dumbledore responded, walking to her office.

"Much appreciated."

Dumbledore entered the office, closing the door behind him as he did. Before he could say anything, he was quickly cut off by Harry. "Before

we start with this debriefing, I would just like to state, that my friends and I are completely innocent of any accusations made against us pertaining to the injuries of this girl. You may begin speaking.” Harry said.

“First of all Mr. Potter, there have been no such accusations pointed against you. I’d asked you not to assume that all the time. It’s not as if I’ve blamed you for everything.” Dumbledore said.

“Experience tells me otherwise.” Harry commented, which Dumbledore pointedly ignored. Neville snickered silently beside him.

“I would like you to tell me what happened tonight with detail. These facts could prove to be helpful in our investigation.” Dumbledore said.

“Very well, I concede this point. I will cooperate with your ‘investigation’ for now.” Harry said.

“Excellent. Now, where did you find Ms. Lovegood’s body?” The aged headmaster asked.

“Third Floor, near the Defense Against the Dark Arts Classroom.” Drake answered.

“And what were you three boys doing there at this time of night? I thought most of the students would be in their dorms despite the fact curfew wouldn’t start for another two hours. Nothing better to do in life I suppose.”

“We were walking back to my Dorms. Neville here, wanted to borrow one of my books and Draco wanted to see what it looked like. You know how purebloods are about these things.” Harry said, causing Malfoy to glare at him witheringly.

“I know all too well Mr. Potter, all too well.” Dumbledore said. “What time did you first sight the girl?” He continued.

“I would say around 7:30.” Drake replied. “Although Harry did say he heard ‘water dripping’ five minutes before that.”

“He heard water dripping? Well, that wouldn’t be that odd I suppose. The sinks on the second and third floor are always dripping. That reminds me, I have to get Murtle to stop doing that.” Dumbledore said. “Anything else you boys might care to add?”

“Well...I did remember a faint ripple of magic passing by us just when Drake turned around the corner and saw the body.” Neville said.

“That would not be unusual for boys as young as you. Magic is connected to our minds at a more instinctual level, much like music. So when young Draco saw the body, fear and shock must have taken a toll on his mind, releasing some magic in the process.” Dumbledore concluded. “Very well, the three of you may leave.” He dismissed them.

What are you up to now Tom?

September 27, 2001, Chamber of Council, Ionos...

“Venerable members of the Council, I am sure most of you are wondering why I have called this meeting today. And because of that, I will not stall the reason of our gathering. As most of you know, I act as the shock absorber of the Council. All of the complaints and problems go through me, and in turn, if certain events are drastic enough, I present it to the council. Today is one of those days where we deal with these problems.

The Dragon Elites have begun complaining about a drastic lack of supplies, magical supplies. Without these things, they cannot hope to properly defend the state against the rebel islands, outnumbered as they are already. Therefore, I would like to relocate some of our funds to compensate with that problem and to fix it so that we will no longer need to spend on this problem in the future.” Rigan stated.

There were various expressions amongst the Counselors. Some were looks of awe, others were glares of hatred, but each and every one of them had to respect the man, no matter how grudgingly, for finding a solution to their problem. “And what might this solution of yours be?” A member asked after a long silence.

Rigan smiled at the man before speaking. "I propose that we create a wand shop within the castle of Montfortal to make specialized wands for priority members of the state. I know most of you gentlemen yourselves have not yet acquired proper wands yet. Wouldn't you all like the chance to wield your own wand for once in your lives?" Rigan argued convincingly. Already he could see the hesitation in their eyes. When you get in their minds, the battle is half won.

"If there are no questions on the matter, let us put this to vote. Those in favor?" He asked. Several of the oppositionist raised their hands, the supporters of his, well their choice need not be said. "Those against?" At this point, this was merely a formality. Everyone could see that the law was getting passed. Without Hyde here to band the oppositionist together, they had nothing to keep them from falling apart. "Then let it be known on this day, September 27, on the year 2002, we pass this act lawfully in accordance with the will of the Lords past."

"May the law bring fruit to our nation." The other members recited in unison.

Harry's Mind...

"It's been a long time since you've come back Harry Potter. I was beginning to get worried you had forgotten about me. And of the Mind Arts for that matter."

"I'm sorry Master. It's just with everything going on I-"

"There are no excuses for your forgetfulness. This is the Mind Arts Apprentice. Only those of weak Minds forget. We do not. Now, let us see what you have done with your life so far." The surroundings quickly changed into the familiar desert in which Harry and the mysterious man had fought time and time again. "Begin."

The man suddenly vanished, an army of shadows in his place. Within moments, the army surrounded Harry's fort easily. As one, the shadows scaled up the walls of the fortress with ease. Despite Harry's best efforts at trying to stop the onslaught, they advanced

unhindered. The stone guards of the fort were smashed easily by the shadows, being untrained as they were after months of stagnation.

Within less than a minute, Harry's mental defenses were completely shattered. "Now to see what is going on." He muttered, touching the pool of water inside the fort.

Harry turned to face where the blond haired boy had pointed. The sight which Harry saw chilled him to the core. Peeves' ghost body was shredded to pieces. Beside him was a young female Ravenclaw student, near dead with similar cuts and scratches along his body. Both were seemingly unconscious. Harry knelt down beside the Hufflepuff. He touched a pool of blood beside her. "This blood...it's warm and fresh. Whatever did this...is still nearby." Harry stated as he took out a Blood Clotting Solution from his bag. "This should stop the bleeding for a while." He poured the potion onto the girl's wounds.

"What kind of a thing could do this? More importantly, how could a thing that dangerous get in here without Dumbledore's knowledge." A slightly pudgy boy asked worriedly, bringing his wand to his side in case anything unsuspected happened.

"I don't know the answer to any of your questions. But what I do know is that this girl needs to be brought to Madame Pomfrey ASAP." Harry said. "Drake, help me levitate her. Neville, keep an eye out for anything that seems remotely weird. Come on let's move. Time is of the essence."

Oh no, it's happening again. The man thought worriedly. The first signs of invasion. I had hoped this day would not come, but I must fulfill my duty. It is time to send out the alarm.

"I expected more from you Apprentice. Clearly you do not place the mind arts in your priority if you have not been practicing your shields. Perhaps I should cancel your apprenticeship with me." He said.

"I'm sorry master. Please, give me one last chance to learn from you." Harry pleaded.

"Very well. But you must promise to work harder. Your shields were pathetically weak. Go and work on it." He said, vanishing with the wind. Excellent, the first step is complete. A source has been secured. At least now we can influence the outside world somewhat.

A week later...

Draco ran alongside the corridor alone, hoping to get to his to his next class on time. Flesh! Drake stopped running as the sound echoed through his mind. Human Blood! The Enemy! "What was that?" Draco asked to no one in particular. "It's probably just in my head. I have nothing to worry about here. Dumbledore assured us we'd be safe." Drake said, reassuring himself.

He continued walking, taking his wand out as he did. The witness will not stand! This time Draco stopped completely. A cold shiver went up his spine. "Who's there?" Drake asked fearfully.

He will not speak, he will not live. "STUPEFY!" Drake yelled, panicking. His spell hit the wall uselessly.

The Dragon shall fall! Draco felt something warm streaming down his chest. A beast leaped out from the shadows and tackled him to the ground. The Shadow will return. The Shadow will prevail. The Shadow is upon you.

A reddish glow started to surround Draco's body as a beast from the shadows got near it. Soon! When the Dragon's has fallen so shall his friends fall! As is my task and sworn upon by the Blade.

"...nicknamed "the shadows" was one of the most fersome Orken Allied Creatures during the Magical State Wars (MSW). These creatures were quick deadly, and accurate assains that, upon choosing a target or targets would literally dedicate their entire lives to fulfill the mission. They were considered to be the most fearsome of all creatures with only the Dragon adn the Basilisk being considered more powerful than those creatures. One of the main reasons why the shadows have never been caught are bcause of their unique ability to literally blend with the shadows..."

-excerpt from: The Creatures of War by Neville Longbottom

Chapter Thirty Two: A Secret Revealed and the weeks go by

It was a dark day for Hogwarts when it was announced on the WWN that Draco Malfoy had been attacked viciously. People started speaking out publicly against Dumbledore, scrutinizing his every action during the investigation. The Board of Governors showed no great love for him either. After all, the offspring of one of their own was just attacked. As soon as Lucius Malfoy was informed that his son was attacked, he organized one of the largest political attacks on Dumbledore ever. Headlines reporting of Dumbledore's poor failure and shouts for his dismissal from all public positions were a daily occurrence. Of course, the man's actions throughout his life had gained him formidable respect, prestige and allies within the community. Many of these people's fates were entwined with Dumbledore's. Willingly or not, many would still come to his aid, if need be.

Within the school, the situation was not much better. Last year the place was a war zone. That did little to settle their nerves. This year the place was going to become the hunting grounds of a monster. That nearly put the students into a state of panic had it not been for constant reassurance of Dumbledore that the school was completely safe; that and the fact that a squad of Aurors had been placed in the school on standby. Of course, one could also say these Aurors were merely a way for Fudge to get information on Dumbledore. He'd never admit it publicly of course. No politician short of an imbecile would.

Hogwarts, DADA Office...

"So what do you think of this new development?" Lockhart asked, handing Harry a cup of butterbeer.

"It's going to hurt Dumbledore a lot. But if he does manage to make it through this and somehow get some credit for solving the mystery, then his fame will be at its peak for another few years." Harry observed.

“The keyword here is ‘if’. We can take certain steps to reduce his chances of acquiring this advantageous position should we decide to do so.” Lockhart said, taking a sip from his own cup.

“How and why would we waste valuable manpower and resources to do so? Could we not simply try to take credit for it ourselves?” Harry asked.

“Even if we did somehow manage to get part of the credit, the increase in of Dumbledore’s fame in the eyes of the people will be exponentially unpredictable and probably far greater than what we could hope to gain from this. It might be ‘considered’ a waste of manpower now, but if things remain as they do, we will be put in a very difficult position.”

“I see your point. But surely the influence of the Malfoy, Longbottom and Potter names behind us, we could not be overwhelmed by Dumbledore himself.” Harry argued.

“Of course not, that would be a preposterous. However, with help, he will be able to overcome us even united as we are. And believe me, he will have help. The Slivensons would easily help him. So would the Weasleys with enough prompting.”

“I highly doubt that.” Harry said dubiously.

“The politician’s rule to success Harry, prepare for the worst, hope for the best.”

“I suppose so.”

“Excellent, we have reached an understanding on the matter. Now let’s get started. Stand up please.” Lockhart requested. Harry complied accordingly. Lockhart started to examine him closely, walking around Harry to make sure he got a good look at every angle.

“Very nice posture, pureblood etiquette helped more than I thought. You have an aura of greatness and leadership about you, as if you were destined for bigger things. That could come in handy for intimidation. You seem respectable enough.” Lockhart muttered to

himself. "You seem to be able to cover the basic passive requirements well enough. Now let's work on your signature angle. Any good public figure should have one." And so the night passed quickly.

A week later...

"You cannot be serious Lord Malfoy! Would you really let Draco be pullet out from school, away form his peers, just because of this one incident?" Dumbledore exclaimed.

"Dumbledore, I have deemed that my son will not be safe in this school during his healing process. While I firmly believe that the Patron in this school is very capable, she simply does not have the ability to care for several mutilated students carefully to ensure full recovery. St. Mungoes will do quite well in that area. Therefore, my son will stay at St. Mungoes until he is completely healed. His assignments can be delivered to him easily and I know personally that he is advanced in his readings. He should have no problems in catching up with his classmates. Taking into account all of these facts, I feel that I am making the best choice for my son. And don't worry about any papers that need to be submitted, I've taken care of it. My decision is final." Lucius said, emphasizing his superior authority in his last few words.

"Very well, Lord Malfoy, I will comply with the withdrawal." Dumbledore said with a hint of sadness. "He could have been great-"

"Spare me the speech Dumbledore. He will be gone for less than three months so you may stop with the dramatics." Lucius interrupted with a hint of annoyance in his voice and a scowl on his face that would make Snape proud. "Goodbye Headmaster."

"I will see Draco in three months then. Farewell, Governor." Dumbledore replied, using Lucius' proper title for the circumstance.

Harry's mind...

"How are you today my young disciple?"

"I am fine master." Harry replied to his teacher of the mind arts.

"Very good, begin going through standard exercise procedure then. I wish to see of any improvements in your shields." The man said. Harry nodded once before closing his eyes to concentrate. Suddenly, a giant hand made of sand burst out of the ground behind the man and slammed the ground, nearly crushing the man by an inch.

"Use your imagination, do not keep reiterating what you have done, you become predictable and from that, weakness of the mind begins. Creativity is a gift, abuse it."

Another fist shot through the ground straight at the man, who leapt backwards to avoid it. "Good, but you are still using your former idea in a different way. Try something else." He commanded. A wall of sand hardened just behind the man causing him to hit it in midair, temporarily upsetting his balance. "A clever trick, but it will take more than that to repel a Dementor's Probe. By the time I am done with you, you should be able to defend your mind against the probe of any being alive on this earth." He paused to think for a while. "Except for the Divine Entity which created everything of course."

That moment of thinking was all Harry needed to continue his assault. Several wooden spikes fell from the sky threatening to impale anyone below them. Unfortunately, the man was a master at mental control; as such, he merely had to wave his hands to make the spikes vanish. "Stop, I grow tired of this." He commanded.

Harry broke out of his trance almost immediately. "You have learned much apprentice, but there is still much to learn. Go and strengthen your shields further, I have no need to test them now. You may leave." He said, disappearing.

He is becoming stronger. I must strike now while it is opportune, otherwise, I may not be able to fulfill my task. I have a duty to do, a job to finish. The man smiled to himself. My time for rest is near.

Ionos...

"You cannot be serious! There has to be something in the law against this!" Hyde shouted, furious at what he had just heard.

"Of course there are rules to avoid that. But, since the members of the Council came out of their own will, it automatically means they agreed to this meetings validity. Therefore, you are overruled by unanimous voting of all unconcerned members." Rigan said.

"This is an outrage. You will not get away with this Rigan! I will see to it personally." Hyde exclaimed, striding away menacingly.

Rigan sighed sadly, watching the retreating back of Hyde. "Problems, Council Lord?" A voice from the shadows asked.

"How long have you been standing there Sinther?" Rigan asked without even looking.

"Almost the entire conversation. How did you know it was me anyway? It could have been any of the other Elites."

"Because none of them have the skills, the guts or a reason to spy on me. You do."

"Well perhaps it hasn't occurred to you that I do not like secrets, especially ones in which I must expend manpower and supplies to give to some unknown force. I may have complied with your requests the first few times at of respect, but the charade ends here. Either you tell me, or I withdraw the resources." Sinther ended his ultimatum with a glare that would have made most men shaking. Faren, however, was not to be considered to be part of that group. The glare had virtually no effect on him. A long awkward silence settled in the room.

"Very well then, if you really demand to know, I suppose I cannot stop you. Follow me." He said, standing up from his desk. Sinther seemed rather surprised at this. Normally, the Council Lord was very tight lipped about secrets. He had expected to be called on his bluff. The pair walked silently through the corridors of the near deserted castle, Montfortal. Living without a King for decades had taken a toll on this building. Without a King, why would there be a need for servants, or maids, or even an active army without anyone to command them?

Most of the rooms in the Castle were there to house them. Now that the King was not yet enthroned, it was empty.

"Perhaps I should explain to you first what you are about to see." Rigan said.

"I think that would be best." Sinther agreed.

"You see, for years now I have secretly tried to find an Heir to the Throne always believing that one would someday reveal himself to us through accident or choice. Well, one such day, I received a report from an ex-Elite that was working for me at the time. The report was positive and days later, confirmed to be completely accurate and factual." He paused for a while to let the shock fade from Sinther.

Continuing, he said, "I began gathering the resources, documents and plans I would need to keep this Heir safe. I could not allow our only hope at the time to die or be incapacitated. I had a duty to perform. However, I feared Hyde and his lackeys would have the Heir assassinated or corrupted somehow. They love their freedom all too much. Therefore, I had to keep this from the Council, deeming it as a High Priority Operation which could usually only be known to the Council during debriefing and evaluation. No one suspected a thing."

"Then I took the next logical step that appeared before me, the creation of a group of guards loyal only to the King. Thus with them on board, I was able to keep a 24/7 watch on the King to keep him safe. I had performed my duty; can you blame me for that?"

"You could have asked the Elites to guard him. They would have been much better." Muttered Sinter.

"And yet, just a few weeks ago, I recall you telling me that there were spies in your ranks. Sure we could have weeded them out, sure we could have picked out the watch carefully, sure we could have trusted some of them, but for how long? You and I both now that we could not hold out using the Elites forever. And for that reason, I present to you, the Dragon's Guard." The door in front of them opened, revealing the vast training grounds which he had so often visited. In it,

dozens of soldiers were being trained how to channel heir magic into their new acquired wands. "Behold, our salvation."

Chapter 33: Motives Unbound

The Ministry...

The past few months here had become a battlefield between the Potters and the Slivensons. Each group tried to gain as many allies as possible within the Wizengamot, disregarding tradition, prejudice, affiliation, and family in an effort to outwit and overpower the enemy.

The majority of the Ministry had to put their support behind Slivenson or risk getting fired by Fudge. To counter this, the Malfoys withdrew their support from the Ministry, forcing the Slivensons to give financial aid to the Ministry. With Malfoy came the support of the Pureblood Supremacists and the Longbottoms were happy to throw in their lot with the Potters as well. Dumbledore's faction was effectively eliminated with most of his members going to one of the two factions contending for control.

"Is everything ready, Minister?" Slivenson asked in a hushed tone.

"Yes, most of the Heads have been convinced to support us in exchange for some donations to their 'departments'. James Potter left to meet a business partner of his in Brazil. We expect to be able to complete the operation with little resistance." Fudge replied.

"Good, we are will soon reap what we have sown. Send out the Aurors." Slivenson said.

Hogwart's Great Hall...

"So when do you think Draco will be coming back from St. Mungoes?" Neville asked.

"I suppose in a few days. Mr. Malfoy says he's almost done recovering." Harry said. "Don't worry about him, he'll be alright. We, however, are still in the killing field." Harry waved his hand in reference to the school. "I'm just glad the monster hasn't killed anyone so far." The boy's trip to St. Mungoes had affected the school largely. The Slytherins, while they did not consider him a leader of

their House, officially or otherwise; still considered him as a valued member of their house.

“So is Alex going to do anything about it?”

“Well, last I heard, he and the Mages were trying to hunt down the monster. You know, now that the Slivenson’s lackeys have become rather passive. I suppose they’ll succeed, given enough time, although subduing the monster is another matter entirely. They still have no clues as to what it might be.” Truthfully, it was hard to imagine a time when Hogwarts was at peace, especially for the newcomers. It had been one ordeal after another for two successive years, most of these being life threatening. Harry’s batch seemed to be very unfortunate or Dumbledore was making things, if indirectly, complicated resulting in conflicts or issues of this sort.

“I wonder what that boy’s up to.” Neville asked no one in particular.

“Whatever it is, I’m glad he’s not bothering me right now.” Harry said.

“You wouldn’t be so happy if it just so happens that his plans messed up yours.”

“Keyword here is ‘If’. Besides, it’s possible that he is going into sock by having one of his enemies almost being murdered, brutally. Any twelve year old would be traumatized, if not fazed, by that.” Harry said.

“Where do you learn these things?”

“I learned it from my mum’s muggle books in the Family Library. It was something like Psychology 101 or something. I can’t remember.”

“What the bloody hell is Psychology?”

“It’s the terms muggle use when referring to the study of the Human Mind.”

“Muggles make things complicated; too many terms and what not. Here, we only have one answer for any problems which occur in the brain, Mind Specialist.”

“Muggles like being accurate I suppose.”

“So any news from Percy?” Neville asked, suddenly changing the topic and in doing so ending their argument over muggles.

“Well, after the Death Eaters and Aurors conducted a prisoner exchange, nothing much. Turns out the Death Eaters had enough portkeys to bring some of the prisoners with them, despite what the Ministry initially thought. The Death Eaters had gathered in their side and the Aurors are waiting on their own side. At most, he says there are minor clashes along the lake. That’s it.”

“So it’s coming to an end at last.” Neville said, taking a bite out of his egg. It was still breakfast after all.

“Presumably so, or at the very least, an uneasy, if unofficial, peace will be settled.”

“It’s really too bad that the Mages haven’t been able to reconcile after two months of bitter fighting, especially now that the Aurors have finally released those held in captivity.” Neville commented, getting some more bacon.

“Save your sympathies for when they’ve been beaten and forcibly rejoined as one group.” Harry said rather coldly. “I doubt it would be an easy transition taking into account the present situation of their relations with each other.”

“Well at least they’ve stopped fighting, for now that is.”

“Yes, I’m thankful for that. With this monster on the loose, it would be impossible to keep them in check, especially when this monster seems unpredictable as it is.” Harry said, sighing.

“While Alex is positive that it will be hard to crush our alliance by force, he fears we do not have the political strength to keep our faction safe;

especially with rumors of the alliance between the Ministry and Slivenson. They alone consist of more than forty percent of the Ministry. Between us and the Malfoys, we could gather a thirty percent plurality, if we're lucky. The remaining thirty percent are led by Dumbledore or are neutral parties. That doesn't bode well for us, not in a bit." Harry said worriedly.

Flashback, 2 days ago, the Room of Requirements

"So Alex, why did you call me?" Harry asked, sitting down on a table.

"We have reason to believe that the Slivenson-Fudge Coalition will attempt to imprison one of our men." Mitch said, answering for Alex.

"Whom do we suspect as the target?" Harry asked curiously. An awkward silence settled in the room with neither of the two men before him wanting to answer. Mitch and Alex exchanged furtive glances as if communicating simply with eye contact. Harry watched them nervously.

"Fine, fine I'll tell him." Mitch said, raising his hands in the air as if to show defeat.

"Well Potter, we suspect your brother to be the most likely victim. As it stands, we don't have enough strength in the Wizengamot to stop such an attempt, despite what the enemy believes. If we tried to stop them, we'd exhaust our political resources far too quickly. That option is unacceptable."

"So we're just going to allow them to take my brother!" Harry yelled angrily.

"Yes, although he only needs to last out for a week or two in wherever they ship him to. By then, we would have enough strength to get him pardoned. This, of course is only applicable to his condition as the next Heir. For anyone else, we'd need maybe months to gather enough support to free him or her. We doubt anyone could last that long without experiencing mental trauma or psychological damage. That course has proven to be the more undesirable than if Alex was to become the one targeted."

“Do whatever you like then but don’t expect to support your decision.” Harry said, storming off.

“We don’t need him to support it, only to accept it.” Alex said to Mitch.

“Are you sure you want to do this?” Mitch asked.

“Yes, it’s for the best and it would protect everyone else. The leader is a guide and a servant to the people.”

End of Flashback

The doors of the Great Hall burst open, eight Aurors streamed inside and entered in a defensive formation. The leader of the squad stepped forward, covered by his comrades in arms. “Attention, in accordance with the Ministry’s will and with the results of our investigation on the ongoing assaults on Hogwarts, we have been charged with capturing and detaining the one who has been the cause of all this.”

Harry looked at Alex, waiting for the inevitable name that would be resounded throughout the Hall. “Harry Potter, under threat of death you are under arrest on the charges of treason, attempted murder, assault, provoking anarchy, and attempt to create a massacre. If you come peacefully, you will not be harmed. Resistance to arrest will lead to bodily injury of yourself and being temporary immobilized.” The Auror announced with an ominous tone.

The proclamation brought about a great amount of relief and shock, the latter was especially so in the case of Alex. The look of surprise and horror was clearly evident. He had expected to be the one being sent to Azkaban, not his brother. This complicated matters. There was simply no way he would allow them to ship his brother off to Azkaban without a fight, political strategy be damned.

Death Eater Headquarters, Ireland...

Rookwood looked outside the window of his newly built base of operations. The meeting room was currently being filled with the

Commanders of the Death Eaters. What was not commonly known was that there was a hidden safe room concealed in the meeting room which overlooked the assembly area of the Death Eaters.

“Sir, they’ve been assembled, as you requested.” One of his attendants reported.

“I will be right there.” Rookwood replied. The attendant bowed respectfully before leaving. Rookwood sighed. “It’s time to face the world once more.” He muttered to himself, entering the meeting room.

“Rookwood, it’s been along time since we last saw each other. It’s been a year has it not? We planned your escape and you in turn freed us from captivity.” Rudolphus said to his old friend.

“Of course, everything has gone accordingly as we planned. With our combined expertise, we will be able to overpower the Aurors once and for all.” Rookwood said.

“Are you this is the best action to take? I have overheard some of the men’s conversations and they seem discouraged. This defeat has shaken their faith in you Rookwood. Even our return did little to uplift their spirits. They have become used to thinking of themselves as an unstoppable war machine when together. For the first time since this conflict started, doubts of our eventual triumph over the Ministry have started to become voiced in public; something they would never have dared to do before the defeat from what I’ve gathered. Perhaps we underestimated the price of such a loss. Our men are losing discipline, and with it, their morale.” Said Alexei.

“If we win this next upcoming assault, they’re morale shall return.” Rabastan argued.

“That’s only if we win. We’d have to put ourselves in a position to take Ireland or at least drive the Aurors out. The men need to feel secure and we need more recruits. Ireland is ripe for this task.” He said.

“The manipulation and preparation for such an occurrence, taking into account our resources, would be costly.” Rudolphus added.

“But the result would restore an invaluable asset back to us; Morale and determination. Something essential to our men’s willingness to continue this war.” Rookwood said.

“So considering we actually go with this plan of yours, where do you propose we strike?”

A thudding sound was heard as a knife suddenly hit the table in response. “Belfast, the regional capital.”

Silence greeted him.

“Have you gone insane or are you purposely making us lose?” Rabastan growled.

“I think it’s a pretty good plan actually. If you look at it carefully, that is.” Alexei said, nodding his head understandingly.

“Will either of you bother to explain to us who are not considered ‘smart’ of strategic warfare?”

“The Aurors are lax and most of their forces are scattered about. With a strike force, we could seize certain key areas around and within the city, manipulate their wards to our use, and rush the West with no effective chain of command organizing their efforts. We would be fighting a series of rogue armies who would have no support, no flank guards, and limited supplies. Of course, it is a rather daring plan.”

Chapter 34: The Endgame Begins

February 14, one day before the Trial...

"Do you understand what you've gotten yourself into Minister?" The blond aristocrat asked angrily.

"I know what I'm doing Lucius. Do not take me as a fool." The man said. "Besides, you and the Potter family had been at war for years, I had thought this would make you happy."

"That would be true but this boy is my son's friend and therefore, my friend. I am Oath bound to help him. Back off while you can Fudge, otherwise, your precious administration might find itself lacking in terms of funding. Potter has friends in the Goblins and I will not support you in this act of foolishness. The choice is yours. Good day Sir!" Lucius said, storming off angrily.

This does not bode well for my plans. I had thought Lucius would be swayed to our side. His support is a great loss, but will not change the outcome of the voting. The problem lies in the funds he possesses. Without it, I could hardly continue keep my political superiority in the Ministry. I would be unable to pay off my spies and then, they would refuse to give me valuable information to keep some idealistic opponents on a short leash. I would lose my power. That cannot happen if I am to be able to keep Potter contained and the Ministry pacified. I will have to find other sources. Fudge thought, watching Lucius storm off.

I must warn James Potter immediately. Without his help, our resistance, no matter how stiff, will fail. The only hope now is young Alex to rally enough support to stall until Potter Senior arrives. I just hope he's up to it. He'll need to gather his wits about him. Lucius thought. He took out his wand and ported out of there back to his Manor.

Longbottom...

Frank Longbottom had to admit, he held no great love for the Malfoys or the Potters. He might not have hated them, but that didn't mean he

liked them. His attitude was closer to indifference than anything else. And yet, he could not help but feel compassion for the young Harry Potter when news reached him of the boy's incarceration and subsequent trial. The boy was blameless, this much he knew.

But to actually vote him innocent? The repercussions of such an act might attract unnecessary anger towards his family. And the continuation and protection of Family always came before personal attachments or decisions. It was tradition.

This led to the fact that one Lucius Malfoy and one Alex Potter were standing before him, asking him of his help against Fudge and Slivenson. If I help you against them, what assurance of protection would I gain? I must, after all, be responsible for my family."

"We can guarantee that the Potter, Black, Lupin, Pettigrew, and Weasley Families will support your defense. Those Families following the Malfoy Family will also pledge an Oath of Mutual Defense, whether they choose to or not." Lucius said smoothly. "In addition, the Dark Faction has agreed to support me in this decision of voting against Slivenson. Our main problem is convincing those still uncommitted. They hold the key to winning this political battle. Your active resistance against his condemnation would be a huge boost to us. We only need to wait until James Potter returns to rally his supporters more effectively."

"And if we fail? What then?"

"Then nothing. We lose a valuable asset, but by that time Potter would have returned to save us. However, trying to free the young lad would be immensely difficult." Lucius stated.

"Really? So this all to try and save the boy from mental trauma and the dementors." Longbottom concluded.

"You could say so. He is too valuable to the Potter Family to be sent to Azkaban. His mind is one of the finest we've seen in years. Any damage to it and we would lose a great ally."

“Listen here Malfoy. I allow the both of you to present your case to me because of the Pact of the Last. For your sake’s, I will remain a neutral partying this conflict. You have my word on that. Unfortunately, I cannot and will not act on such presumptions.”

“Very well, Lord Longbottom. We will honor your choice.” Alex suddenly said, stopping Lucius from speaking. The two left Longbottom to his thoughts.

Did I make the right choice, shunning them like that?

Of course! I did this for my family.

But there is a difference between family and being right. His conscience countered.

I could have done nothing for that boy! His fate was sealed the moment he made Slivenson his personal enemies.

I could save that boy from imprisonment. I would protect his youth and innocence, or what is left of it. Something I swore I would do many years ago.

And yet, that seems so very long ago. What importance is a promise to no one but yourself?

To know that I am still the man I once was. That politics, money, power, and bureaucracy has not changed me or my morals. There is a difference between what is right and what is easy. I fear I have chosen what is easy.

Moral character will not keep your lineage safe from harm!

Better to die with honor then live with shame! Better to fight for the truth then to hide behind lies!

And what of loyalty to family? The honoring of your responsibility to your family?

What about loyalty to self and to others? Loyalty to the government and the Wizengamot? The responsibility of keeping the law fair and equal?

You forget about our Motto. Prosapia supremus totus His conscience was silenced...for now. He had justified his actions before his own eyes and sated the guilt of knowing he did nothing to let a boy go to hell on earth. Prosapia supremus totus! Family above all!

Ireland, Magical Belfast Outskirts...

"Make ready!" Rookwood shouted so his voice would be heard by all his men. The five hundred handpicked Death Eaters formed up quickly according to the squad they belonged to. "Take Aim!" All along the line, wands were taken out and aimed at the Front of the Auror Headquarters Camp. Many wands could be seen glowing with malicious, sickly colored lights as they prepared to unleash their fury upon their unsuspecting and hapless enemies.

"FIRE!" A wave of magic shot out of the Force; almost melding together to form one mass of energy, and crashed into the first line of defenses of the Auror camp, completely and totally obliterating it. The agonized screams of dying men filled the air, as their bodies were quite literally torn apart by the sheer intensity of it all. The other who died were instantly vaporized, not even knowing they were under attack.

Startled cries of alarm soon filled the air afterwards, the camp bursting to life at the face of this new threat. "CHARGE!" The Death Eaters started running forward, firing spells as they did. The first two lines conjured shields to defend those behind him while those in the third and fourth row began to change their wands into swords and spears. Spells hit both sides causing gaps in the ranks. The difference was this: for every Auror that fell, another took his place; for every Death Eater dead, the gap stayed unfilled.

Yet, despite this fact, the Death Eaters still continued in their charged. They were trained well, to attack and charge in the heat of battle, to obey each and every command instantly and effectively.

100 Meters, more men continued to fall from both sides, the Aurors sneered at their enemies' suicidal charge; a feeble attempt not to mention a stupid a stupid one.

50 Meters, violent bursts of energy shook the ground. A screen of smoke erupted from the very ground, blocking the Auror's line of sight.

30 Meters, the Aurors were now fighting blind, shooting wildly into the smoke. The Death Eaters continued in their charge, dropping what shields they had and converting into an entirely melee force.

5 Meters, the first line of Death Eaters reached the Aurors. They thrust their weapons forward, their blades bathing in blood for the first time.

The Death Eaters drove deeper and deeper into the Auror force, slaughtering the hapless long range combatants. In the enclosed space, their swords and spears created havoc and fear within the Aurors, haven't seeing such ferocity and weapons in combat in their entire lives. The last time such weapons were used was five hundred years ago. A frantic melee ensued, one which the Aurors could not win though they outnumbered the Death Eaters 5 to 1. They simply had no way to counter such an attack. Magical Shields could not stop Steel and Mithril. Spells could not be used at such close distances without friendly casualties.

Quickly and brutally, the Aurors were shredded and scattered, forced to run for their lives. They found out however, that these Death Eaters were much faster runners than them. Their hand was forced. They either hoped to shoot a spell that would kill them fast enough or get butchered as they tried to out run them. Some chose to fight, hoping to save the others and buy them some time. Their efforts were futile.

Within an hour, the entire camp was decimated. Its residence of three thousand Aurors was put to the sword like sheep. Less than five hundred men escaped that night of death, none of them officers or commanders. They retreated in groups or as individuals depending on their skill and rank.

Dawn broke over the bloodied camp finding no one to shine over but the dead. There was an ominous feeling in the air as the fire continued to grow, engulfing the area. A deathly still hung over the remnants of the camp, hundreds of men slain for the ideals of some madman and the stupidity of an inept government. The Death Eaters veterans were all but decimated, such was the price of victory and war.

The End draws near.

Hogwarts...

“Scour the walls! Leave nothing unchecked. We have to find a trace of that creature.” Mitch commanded. The results of their search for the monster had, so far, bared no fruit, but they were getting closer each day. Just the other day, they had extracted and preserved the essence of the creature with a little bit of luck. Its essence was pitch black, almost invisible to even Aura Seekers; almost impossible to find.

From what they had found out about it, it seemed that the creature was similar to a shadow, being able to be part of their surroundings and more specifically, in darkness. It was almost like a chameleon, except it could only hide in the dark. But with the amount of objects and shadows in the world, it wouldn't be difficult, even at day.

Soon we'll find the creature behind these attacks and put it down for good. That should show the students of our goodwill and intents towards them. Certainly it would stop some support from reaching Morris. “Make sure you get as many samples as possible. We need more for our experiments on its capabilities and behavior so we can capture it.”

FOOLISH HUMAN! YOU DARE TRY AND HUNT ME, THE MASTER OF HUNTERS? The voice suddenly boomed in his mind.

Who are you? Mitch asked.

I am the shadow you seek. I am the master hunter. Be warned. No mercy is shown to my enemies.

We do not need or expect any mercy from beasts and savages. Mitch remarked insultingly.

It shall please me to bring upon your demise. Until we meet again Human scum. My time has not yet come.

“...One of the oddest things a Shadow would do as an assassin was to speak to its prey weeks or even months before he would kill them. It appears they seem to delight in taking out a prepared enemy. From what has been gathered on their Clan based society, it seems it shows a testament of their skill. A competition, per se.”

-excerpt from: Notes of Professor Neville Longbottom on the Shadow Fiend Species...

Chapter 35: Trial and Error

Ionos...

"I'm telling you now Rigan, this is our only chance at rescuing the Heir!" Faren exclaimed.

"The time is not yet ripe. If we choose to engage now, we would have an underage ruler according to the law governing this land. That law is bound by magic need I remind you. We would be no better off. Even then, the Azkabanian Council has accepted our request to keep the boy under strict surveillance if he gets sent there. They have agreed to keep the dementors away from the boy as much as possible. The act is done. We have done all we can to save the Lord as much pain as possible while keeping our people from being exterminated. Besides, do you really think I do not have men already working on freeing the Heir?" Rigan said with a tone of finality.

"That is not enough. We need active force. The council will never accept this. We cannot and will not risk the safety of our Lord to the hands of those Azkabanians." Faren said, hissing out the last word more than saying it.

"You cannot let your grudge against the Azkabanians affect your thinking. This is what is best for the Heir. I am not allowing you to move against the Auror Escorts. Do not force my hand against you Faren." Rigan said.

"Technically, you don't have the authority to do such a thing since I am appointed by the Council. You'd have to reveal a group you sanctioned. You know as well as I do they'd turn on you. Counselor Hyde will be like a shield to hide behind for me. Sinther will not tolerate our disbanding either." At this, Rigan looked shocked.

The old man hesitated continue. After an awkward silence, he finally gave in. "If I empower you to strike against the Aurors, you will have to dress like mercenaries; no standard equipment, no official battle armor or uniforms, no emblems, standards or flags, nothing that will reveal your origin. And you will strike only when I tell you too. Do you accept these terms?" Rigan said regretfully.

“Yes, I do.”

“Very well then, I am authorizing the use of lethal force against the Aurors, but do so at your discretion. We need a loyal legion of trained men for the Heir, not an army of outcasts, murderers, and fanatics with no discipline.” Rigan said. “Commander Sinther will provide you the transportation you need via Abraxans. You must keep in mind though; there will be no air support of any kind permitted. You must truly appear to be a band of renegades. Before you are forced to act, think about what your doing if our old Lord was still alive, dismissed.”

“Of course sir, by your leave.” He saluted briskly before leaving.

Faren has become what he was destined to be, a fanatic defender of the Dragon. I have forged him, shaping him into what I needed him to become, and in the end, he overpowered even I. He is completely devoted now to the Heir and to no one else but the Heir. Was I wrong, perhaps, in my choice? He may become too rash, something the Heir does not need in one of his Commanders. If that happens, then I fear he will be replaced. However, he is but a man. I will not condemn my brothers and sisters for the sake of a man who has lost his sense of reason and patience. He will have to be tamed soon.

Tame the dragon while it is young, less he consumes you when you are weak.

Ministry of Magic, Department of Law Enforcement, Holding Cell...

“How are you feeling Harry?” Alex asked, concerned.

“Fine, just a little nervous about this is all.” Harry replied. It was the first time Alex had seen his brother so...bothered by something. He couldn't blame him for that.

“Don't be Potter. I need you calm and reserved during the trial. I'll take care of the rest.” Lucius said. “Your father has instructed your family barrister, William Vaunt, to lead your defense until he returns.” He turned to the barrister in question. “I wish you luck Vaunt, you will need it against the team Slivenson has managed to round up. We

leave the young Mr. Potter in your capable hands.” Alex and Lucius turned and left leaving Harry with Vaunt.

“When did you get appointed by my father? I don’t seem to recall having known of this.” Harry said rather suspiciously.

“I was asked to replace your old barrister due to his failing health. Do no worry, I have sworn under oath to do my best to keep you out of Azkaban.” Vaunt said. He saw his look of regard. “I am a freelance barrister if you must know. Your father has expressed his...faith in my ability to stall court actions along with the goblins. Now, I would advise you to answer any questions with utmost caution. You will have to rely on yourself in deciding about this. Try not to reveal anything discriminating unless absolutely necessary.”

A knock on the door was heard before three Aurors entered. “Mr. Potter, your presence has been asked for by the Wizengamot. They are ready to proceed with your case.” The one leading them said.

“Thank you for informing us Auror. Come along Mr. Potter, we have work to do.” The two got up and followed their escorts out of the room.

Flashback three days ago, Gringotts...

William Vaunt was led by a goblin runner through the mysterious interior office network of Gringotts. The goblin stopped at a door that had a silver outline to it. On the door, these words were inscribed:

Senior Manager Chamlore Ironfist

Directorate of the Distribution of Wealth

(Dot-DoW)

Those words implied several things. The most important one to Vaunt was that he had been called by a Senior Goblin, an honor most wizards would never receive. There were two possible reasons he could have been called. 1) He had insulted this goblin’s honor and now he had to duel him to the death. That could jeopardize everything he had worked for. That choice wasn’t as appealing to him

and considering he had done nothing against them in general, he opted that the second choice was more reasonable. 2) His services were being required. Of course, it could always be succession of wealth but he was not from an ancient family, so to speak.

He entered the room tenaciously, making sure to knock first. In his mind, dozens of rules about Goblin courtesy flooded him as he tried to recall them. A single mistake here could cost him his life. The goblin, without looking up, called out to him. The fact that the goblin did that vaguely unnerved him. "Ah, Mr. Vaunt, please take a seat. We have much to discuss."

Vaunt looked at him, somewhat perplexed at the sign of friendliness. "As my sources have found out, you have decided to go for the position of Barrister in the House of Potter. Mr. Potter has informed me that you have been chosen to replace that French fellow. Now, as you might have known, Mr. Potter's youngest son is being sued."

Oh yes, I know all too well, goblin. All too well. Vaunt thought silently.

"Since you are a freelance originally, we have been asked to provide the best support team we could find for you. We have already sent the team in advance to the Ministry to gather information. You will see them there. We wish you luck, William Vance, you will need it." The goblin said, grinning toothily.

End Flashback

Vaunt snapped out of his daze upon entering Courtroom 3. Inside, the Wizengamot were already seated. They would be the jury, in essence. All major cases were required the Wizengamot to act as the jury. Otherwise, for smaller cases, only four Wizengamot juries were allowed along with four civilian juries, two juries from the law enforcement department and two ministry juries.

But this was not the case. This was not merely a case of punishing some child; for that would be buy the Board of Governors or the Department of Education instead. No, this was far more controversial than that. This was about sending a Noble's underage child to Azkaban, which in itself was a preposterous thought. It was unheard

of. The Nobles were protected by law from ever being sent there against their will. It was for this reason the Trial had two fronts Fudge needed to win.

First and foremost was finding a way to legally throw him in Azkaban. Secondly, they had to prove his guilt.

“Members of the Wizengamot, we are gathered here today for the trial of Harry James Potter accused of masterminding assault and attempted murder on 9 counts, treason, and provoking anarchy. Due to Chief Warlock Dumbledore’s relationship to the accused, he may not preside over the trial. In his stead will be Minister Fudge.” A scribe announced.

“Lord Slivenson you have the floor.” Fudge said.

“Thank you Minister. Ladies and Gentlemen of the Wizengamot, I will admit that Mr. Potter is one of our best and brightest. He has a brilliant mind. However, what’s to say he hasn’t and won’t use this mind of his for evil. That would have a devastating effect. He could grow to be even greater than Voldemort. And with his charismatic personality, I have no doubts he would have a large gathering of men and women under his command.

Even before, he has shown to be a dangerous force, one which we cannot hope to control. He has delved into the Dark Arts, with no hope of recovery. There is not a doubt in my mind that he is the one behind these attacks. Therefore, I believe it is best to contain a threat before we have another Dark Lord on our hands. I ask the Wizengamot to support me in stopping this new menace from growing any further. Let us stop the threat before it begins. Let us join hands to spare our youths, the future of wizard kind, from war and the terrors that come with it.”

“Thank you for that statement Lord Slivenson. Barrister Vaunt, your opening statement please.”

“Honorable People of the Wizengamot, my client has shown no violence or act of aggression to others unless they had started a feud with him. He has been remarkably well behaved and I am certain that

if you interrogated each and every professor he has, none of them would complain about lack of manners or disrespectfulness. He is charismatic, yes, but he is also loyal and caring. What's to say charisma and cleverness are necessarily bad things? Most of you fine gentlemen and ladies have plenty of both, I don't see any of you on trial.

The Potters have always believed to be prepared at all times for all situations. Many of you share their beliefs. For this reason, they trained their children to defend themselves from threats. That training was justified when the young Potter was attacked by a group of students, and even at one point had to fight the Dark Lord himself!" Gasps and shudders swept through the room following his statement.

"We owe this boy a debt of gratitude for stopping the Dark Lord's rise. As for the threat he poses, well, we have no proof he will be a threat or will even choose to be one. What's to say he will not become a developer of spells or an Auror; choosing to defend us instead. He would be a powerful asset. Innocent until proven guilty I say!" Silence met Vaunt's speech. Then a man in the crowd started clapping, followed by another and another until the whole room had burst into applause for him.

"That was a very nice counter speech." Harry remarked.

"Thank you. I had it written before the trial." Vaunt said, quite pleased with his performance.

"You mean it wasn't extemporaneous?" Harry asked, surprised.

"No sir, I had figured out what they would be saying before hand or at least the general idea of it. From there, I built up my speech. I merely had to add and erase some parts, but that was basically it."

"Impressive, very impressive."

Lucius...

"That's quite a barrister." Alex said quietly to Lucius.

“Yes, he is. I wonder where your father got him. I would have loved for him to be my defense.” The blond noble said.

“This is just the beginning though, I wouldn’t want to get too over confident about his skills.” Alex said cautiously.

“Perhaps your right.”

“...despite initial advantages and disadvantages in the Trial of Harry Potter, no side held a clear majority in the final voting. In the end, underhanded methods such as bribery, coercion, blackmail, and threats were employed to win. The Department of Justice has verified this fact though has refused to move against the people identified claiming they had ‘immunity’ or had been pardoned.

It has also been proven that the workings of the trial had been rigged. Several States had been involved in this Trial and each had tried to affect the outcome of the Trial...”

-excerpt from: a report on the Trial of Harry Potter by Clarence Gylar.

Chapter 36: Trapped by our choices

Brazil, 3 days earlier...

James Potter was pacing in his rented room when he heard a knock on the door. "Come in."

"Senhor, bom dia. (Good Morning, sir) You have a message from England." A surprisingly tall Brazilian man said.

"Bom dia Thiago, (Good morning Thiago) thank you." James replied, taking the letter from the hands of his Brazilian butler.

"Will you be requiring anything else from me senhor?" Thiago asked.

"No, that will be all." James said, waving him away. The butler left the room but was sure to be standing outside the door within hearing distance.

Dear Father,

I bear terrible news. My brother, Harry, has been framed for unleashing a dark creature at Hogwarts. I have done my best to organize political support in your name against Slivenson and Fudge's crusade against us. I do not know how long we will last. Already I have doubts of our ability to resist them. Return as soon as you are able. We need your help.

your Heir,

Alex

Perhaps I should return to England now. I've already spoken to the dealer about a contract. But, then again, it would be very rude to leave while the talks are half way done. I might never get a deal here for months because of that act. No, England can wait three more days. I will stay. Alex, he can handle it. He's smart enough and capable enough. James decided. And yet, there was a bad feeling at the back of his head that he couldn't get rid of.

“Thiago, prepare my carriage. I will be leaving for Sau Paulo in an hour. Inform the Count of my visit.”

“As you wish sir.” Thiago said, bowing. He turned to do as he was instructed.

Harry...

Ever since I was young, I had been trained to fight, to fear no one and nothing, to shape my own destiny, to be the master of my fate. I was taught to choose for myself and let no one control my actions. Of course, such training nearly killed my emotions, but that's beside the point. Even though I have few friends in the world due to my training, I have become strong willed and persevering. I am thankful for that. Such traits are present in very few wizards and witches now.

However, all my training never taught me how to handle this. I never thought I would see the day where I would be sentenced to Azkaban. I haven't yet, but I have no doubt I will become well acquainted with that dreadful prison soon. I do not feel scared about the prison, maybe a little uncertain, but not scared. No, I am angry. I know Slivenson and I have had our differences before, but this is taking it to the next level. This is low; unhonorable would be the best term to describe it.

The moment Slivenson decided to send me to Azkaban, he declared war. He started a blood feud. And I intend to finish it, one way or another. No one, and I mean no one at all, gets away with trying to kill me. I will be avenged. It might be today, or tomorrow, or next week, a month, a year, five years, twenty years! But I will be avenged; that I can be sure of.

Let the war commence.

Present day, Trial of Harry Potter...

“Men and Women of the Court, I stand here today to prove that, without a doubt, Harry Potter is guilty of his alleged crimes. That process begins now. Justice will be served.” Slivenson's barrister said emphatically. “The accused is a well known man of great knowledge

for is age, perhaps too great. What's to say that, in his quest for knowledge and power, he didn't come across a dark book or artifact. And in his fallible curiosity, he was unknowingly delving into the dark arts, slowly being corrupted; until one day, he cracked.

"He lost control of his temper and BAM he channeled his magic to allow a portal small enough to summon an otherworldly beast. At first he would be startled yes, but then, the dark influence which had taken hold over his mind would allow him to control and use it for his malicious purposes. Any man, no matter how strong, would be tempted to do so. There is no turning back after that stage. The only hope to spare the world lies in containment." The barrister finished after expounding the original thought to an extreme. Most wizards didn't care though; the threat of dark magic corrupting a boy was all too real. It had happened countless times before.

"Barrister Vaunt, your argument." Fudge requested, rather pleased with himself.

"Thank you Minister." Vaunt stood, clearing his throat. "People of Britain, hear me for my cause. My client stands accused of crimes, without proof, with no strand of hard evidence. These prosecutors are armed only with circumstantial reasoning and facts yet to be proven true. They base their argument on opinion and imagination. I will deliver something with more substance than that drivel they insist on making us listen.

"There is no evidence of Mr. Potters so called 'exposure to Dark Magic'. In fact, we can most certainly say without a doubt that it is impossible he was exposed to dark magic. For where would he get it from? From his home maybe? The Potters are a Light Family. They have been for hundreds of years. Aside from his upbringing to prevent or at the very least decrease the chances of exposure, he has been under the official guidance of his brother for over a year now.

"His brother would have noticed anything strange about him. And as you all should know, changes always happen when Dark Magic takes hold of a person. I have here," Vaunt took out a paper from his briefcase, "a signed statement from his brother that he noticed no

such change. It is bound by magic. At Hogwarts, he would have been under the eye of the teachers and Dumbledore. I rest my case, Minister.” Vaunt looked rather smug.

Slivenson’s barrister looked downcast with the rest of his team, they had been outwitted. They were whispering to each other fervently for a while before the head barrister stood up again. “Your honor, the prosecution would like to put the accused on the stand.”

“Granted, barrister Joths.” Fudge said in a dismal tone. Harry stood up and walked to the stand confidently.

“Mr. Potter, tell me, do you take trips frequently?” Joths asked.

“It would depend upon your definition of ‘trips’.” Harry replied, his face revealing nothing.

“Oh, you know, excursions to other countries, friendly visits to other people’s houses, the traveling to a place which you would not go to usually or frequently.” Joths said.

“No barrister, I do not take trips frequently.” Harry said.

“Oh, but you have taken some trips correct?” Joths asked, slightly let down.

“Yes, though I fail to see the relevance of your line of questioning.” Harry stated.

“Trust me, Mr. Potter, you will see its relevance soon. Just bear with me. Now, would you deny having visited the Malfoy Estate for the Christmas Break during your first year?”

“No, I would not deny making such a visit. I have gone to his house.” Harry answered, Vaunt was visibly paling. They had found a loophole in his defense.

“Thank you, Mr. Potter that will be all.” Joths turned to face the Wizengamot. “There you have it Ladies and Gentlemen, proof that he may as well have been exposed to dark influences. Not that I am

accusing the Malfoys of anything, but their ancestors have irrefutably dabbled in the dark arts. They also have books on it and artifacts, quite probably. What's to say now that he could not have been exposed? Do you have any proof the Malfoys didn't restrain him from their library?" Jothis finished.

They didn't have any proof, as everyone knew. It would be impossible to ask an oath out of the Malfoys about that, partly because they'd be dead on the spot once they made the oath. Of course, what most didn't know was that the darker of these things were put in storage, things that would get them lifetime in Azkaban. The "legalized" dark material was the only ones shown in the library. An oath or even a testimony would be compromising.

They had been trapped even deeper in their own defense. They gamboled and they lost.

But a battle lost was not a war. They could still win this, with luck and determination. The question was: how to manipulate the situation to their benefit?

1 Grueling hour later, Lucius Malfoy...

The aristocrat stormed out the courtroom with a massive migraine after that fiasco. Their attempt to seal their victory had collapsed like a house of cards and the neutral parties would most likely be against them now. And the failure could mostly be attributed to him. Nevertheless, his testimony would put his entire household under jeopardy, something any pureblood family should understand. Family was always placed above anything else. It was tradition, the law of ancients.

Besides, he didn't particularly feel like chatting up to the dementors in Azkaban, not after he had spent just under a hundred thousand galleons to stop the Ministry from throwing him in; a small fortune in itself, but completely worth its value when traded against going to Azkaban for life.

Potter would understand. He wouldn't have wanted me to go to Azkaban for him, not when I could do so much more good free. Well,

good for him anyway. I could, with some help, wreck total havoc in the Wizengamot, vetoing bills and laws as long as I was supported by a few ancient families. Considering the Potters were inheritors of one of those lines and most of the rest were extinct, it wouldn't be too hard to get their support.

Ionos, Montfortal...

Faren watched his men train with a smile. They were approaching the final stages of their basic training. They wouldn't be anywhere near the skill the Elites would have, but it would be enough to take out Aurors and Rogues given the element of surprise over the former. They could fight and ride, that was assured at least, not that they'd ever be assigned permanent Dragon mounts. Better safe than never at least, it'd be useful during evacuations.

"They're training proceeds well, I assume?" Rigan asked.

"Yes sir. I am most pleased with the progress they have shown. They now stand a decent chance against our enemies." Faren said.

"Oh? Even against the Bandits and their lackeys?" Rigan asked.

Faren frowned. "Yes, even them. Where are you going with this?" He asked in a demanding tone.

"As you know very well, I was the one who created and authorized Project Guardian Angel."

"So it's a project now?" Faren asked, scrutinizing his superior's words.

"Yes, it is. It is 'officially recognized' as an organization under testing." Rigan explained. "If it were an authorized organization, Hyde would have noticed it by now."

"Very well, I fail to see your point."

"It's simple. As an organization under testing, you are directly under my command." Rigan said.

“That’s absurd. No military force has ever been put under the command of a civi-”

“With all due respect, this is not a military force. It’s still a militia. No non-authorized group has ever been a military force. Armed groups are considered rebels if they’re against the government or militia if they’re with the government.”

Faren’s eyes widened. “No, you wouldn’t dare replace me as head!”

“Of course not. Instead, I am ordering you to reassign all your men to deal with the bandits. No further operations until this task is fulfilled. Am I understood?”

Faren sighed in defeat. “Yes sir.”

“Good, oh and Captain? Make sure no word of this reaches the council.”

“Yes sir.”

Chapter 37: Judgment of the Damned

Ireland, Graham's Camp...

Graham stormed into the room and was greeted by the salute of his men as a show of respect to their commander. Graham returned the salute hastily and motioned for them to sit. "Can anyone tell me what the hell is going on and why we're here?" He asked with a hint of irritation.

"Sir, we've just lost contact." An aide replied. Graham recognized him as the head of his communications personnel.

"Lost contact? With who?" Graham asked.

He glanced nervously around the room before responding. "With everybody sir. As of yesterday, all communication lines broke down. My men are working round the clock to restore the channels of communication, but it seems that the entire Irish Network just collapsed."

"And we have no idea what's caused this?" Graham asked, slamming his fist into the table.

"Well, there might be a way, although bear in mind there is no real way to prove this, but-

"What is it?"

"An Auror arrived an hour ago claiming to have come from McCullough's base. He-

"Wait, McCullough's base? As in the Belfast Porting Terminal?" Graham asked, interrupting yet again.

"Precisely sir; He claims to be a survivor. Of what, we have yet to find out."

"Bring him in, I want to hear what he has to say." Graham ordered.

"Right away sir." The aide bowed before leaving with two armed guards stationed at the entrance.

Moments passed in awkward silence as many men and women in the room fidgeted uncomfortably. The prospect of a successful attack on the Belfast Porting Terminal (BPT), their largest, most reliable reinforcement terminal in the island, made many uneasy. It was their only way safe way back to the mainland aside from a few smaller stations posted around the BPT camp; those were most likely destroyed with the BPT.

The aide suddenly returned with the said refugee, disrupting the silence that had invaded the room. "Sir, this is Auror Edward Bane, survivor of the Belfast Porting Terminal Attack." The aide announced.

"So, Auror Bane, tell me of what happened at the BPT?" Graham said, leaning forward in interest.

"Well sir, I don't remember much of what happened, but I'll try." The man took a deep breath before continuing. "It was about midday when it happened. I was assigned a position at a guard post near the forest that day. I remember an explosion, shaking the ground, before screams filled the air. We were caught totally unprepared; no one would have thought the Death Eaters would be able to get our location. We weren't even supposed to be fighting them, we were just guard detail!

"It was a one-sided slaughter sir, pure and simple. I saw the lights and the Dark Mark in the camp. Most of us in the station rushed back to base to help out, but it was too late. We were halfway there when we saw the remnants of the Aurors scattering into the fields and forest to escape. It happened all so fast, we never stood a chance. Some of the others were just fresh to the killing fields sir, they just turned tail and ran at the first sign of trouble. The camp was completely on fire and anyone who stayed within the vicinity was turned to a crisp. So, me and the lads decided to run for it as well. At first we decided to go to Belfast-

"So how come you're here and not there?" Graham asked, interrupting his tale.

“Because when we got to Belfast, the entire camp had gone to hell.” An ominous atmosphere descended upon the room accompanying the declaration. “There were corpses and bodies strewn across the entire grounds and buildings collapsing all around the area. At the middle of it all, we saw Commander Blackthorn and his staff crucified or under torture. Their screams were ear shattering sir.”

“Is that all you have to report Auror Bane?” Graham asked.

“Well sir, there is one thing saw that was odd. The Death Eaters...they were carrying blades and weapons for melee combat.”

“Thank you for the information Auror Bane, you have done your country a service. I will be assigning you to a new squad. Before that happens, I want you to get some rest. Dismissed.” They exchanged salutes before the man left Graham and his staff to discuss this new revelation.

“Sir, what do we do now? Without the BPT and Commander Blackthorn, we have no way to access reinforcements or supplies, both of which are crucial to our ability to hold this island. It would take weeks to get a new one operating, and then we have to deal with the Death Eaters as well.” An aide said worriedly. The men started muttering to themselves and each other.

Graham raised his hand to silence them. “I am giving you the opportunity now. If you do not want to follow me, you have my permission to leave and escape to the mainland, and this goes for the men as well. I will not have any forced to follow me.” No one moved to leave. “Very well, announce it to the men and see how many remain. I want men sent to recruit from the surrounding settlements, villages, and camps. Tell them to look for supplies and weapons, preferably swords or spears. Try and gather as many mounts as possible. We’ll also be needing maps, as many kinds as we can get. Men, tonight we will hold our ground. Tomorrow, I want men on mounts sent in groups of five to patrol our perimeter constantly. You have your orders gentlemen. Dismissed.” He saluted to them before waving them away. His aides returned the gesture before leaving to fulfill his orders.

Now, the only problem lies in which route to use, and which risks to take.

1 day before sentencing...

"What do you mean the Faction refuses to support my decision?" Malfoy asked angrily.

"Unfortunately, it has been deemed that your decision is inadequate and compromising. They have decided to vote according to will instead." Parkinson said gleefully. Voting according to will was a rare chance for a person to vote individually in a faction without having to fear a form of punishment. This was only applicable to major cases.

Malfoy narrowed his eyes at this. "This is your doing isn't it?" He growled, fingering his wand.

"But of course, Malfoy. You didn't think you could back out of our deal without consequences did you?"

"And you choose to turn on me now? When the stakes are highest and the consequences are harsher? If Slivenson isn't held off until Potter arrives to ally with us, we are all going down. Is revenge really worth the destruction of our group?" Malfoy asked vindictively.

"Yes. I and my kin will never forget your betrayal against our line. We had hoped to refresh our lineage by the marriage of our two families. We trusted you to stand by your word. We were clearly wrong in that assumption. Family before all Malfoy, and we Parkinsons are deadly serious about revenge." Malfoy silently cursed himself. The Potter boy's advice had come back to haunt him. His decision to break off the marriage contract between his son and Pansy Parkinson may have been a crucial one.

"You will be the death of me Parkinson."

"That's what I'm hoping will happen Malfoy." He retorted.

“When this ordeal is over- and I assure I will survive- I will personally make sure your family never rises to anything more than a minority. Be ready for the consequences of your actions. The Malfoys never go down without a fight. Never.” He said the last part vehemently. “Now get out of my house. Unless you are bringing nothing but a letter of full apology and submission, I don’t want to see you set foot on any of my properties ever again!” He yelled angrily, shaking his fist.

“Very well, Lord Malfoy. Don’t be surprised when the faction decides to evict you of your position.” He said coolly, striding away.

Parkinson is more vicious than I thought. He has been surprisingly...sneaky about his approach. I will have to act fast to pull out what supporters I have from the faction before they get turned against me. The Malfoys will prevail in the end. We always have. I don’t plan on losing now to some upstart. Damn the Potters, damn my morals and damn my allegiances. Parkinson will not get away with this!

Sentencing Day...

Fudge sat at the High Chair, smiling deviously. His plans had come together almost perfectly during these past few weeks. Despite what the Potters thought, they had no chance of winning this case. James Potter’s supposed ‘supplier’ in Brazil was under his pay and a man with no qualms about backhanded play. Potter had reacted accordingly, deciding to finish his deal instead of coming back immediately. Both he and Potter knew that there were few stable suppliers of herbal ingredients in Brazil.

The disruption of Lucius’ control over the so called “Dark Faction” was a startling development, though a pleasant one nonetheless. It just made it so that their victory in the trial was concrete. It was only a matter of time now before they would seize control of the Wizengamot. Then all who opposed them would fall apart like a house of cards out at sea.

Now, the crux of the problem after all this was Slivenson. He posed a large threat to Fudge’s own coalition. Not only was he a big influence

on the minds of Fudge's lackeys, he would have a chance to draw away most of his followers, giving him absolute control. That meant he would have to comply with that man's wishes or face the threat of being dismissed in a Vote of Confidence.

He could always go along with it and, in the long run, become a political goon for the Slivenson just so he could retain his power. But he had to face reality. Fudge was always too much of a megalomaniac to be willingly under anyone unless for personal gain. He had too much pride in his authority to relent.

And Fudge decided that day that he would do what he could to stop Slivenson from gaining complete superiority in the Wizengamot. His pride was still great.

Unknowingly, he had begun his downfall. Pride would break his power. It would be the instrument for his final defeat.

Wizengamot Voting Chamber...

"This session is in order." Fudge declared, banging his gavel to silence his fellow politicians.

"I believe that the boy should be charged guilty of all crimes! Let him rot in Azkaban as he deserves!" Parkinson declared scornfully.

"Perhaps you are merely biased in your opinion Lord Parkinson. After all, the Potters are your known enemies." Longbottom replied critically.

"Your point? Bias and favor has always played a major role in the politics and decision making of the Wizengamot." He retorted.

"Yes, but never on trials. Never when it comes down to the fate of the people. Look at Lord Malfoy. He is one of the staunchest opponents of the Potter family along with lord Slivenson. Why then are these two men facing against each other? Clearly, prejudice is affecting your decision when others seem unfazed by it." Frank chided.

"Malfoy's involvement in this goes far deeper than you think. It's more personal than my choice even." Parkinson said boldly.

"I do not look kindly upon those who insult me Parkinson. Perhaps you wish to duel me? We all know who would win in a fair match. Then again, you never have played fair." Malfoy said, sneering. Parkinson narrowed his eyes in anger, but backed down nonetheless.

"Enough of this gentlemen. We are here to decide a man's fate, not argue over who's better than whom. I am calling a vote for convicting him on all crimes. All in favor?" Dozens of hands were immediately raised. A few seconds passed and a few more hesitant hands shot up. Fudge silently counted the hands. "All against?" Malfoy and Longbottom raised their hands quickly, along with a few other people. Surprisingly, Dumbledore, who had been expected to abstain, voted in favor of Harry. A few more people decided to raise their hands, seeing that the aged wizard was backing up a boy. Some were noticeably from Slivenson's camp.

"Very well. In favor of conviction on all alleged crimes, 129. Those against, 121. 16 abstaining. Harry Potter will be sentenced to Azkaban for life for his crimes against society. Case dismissed." Fudge said, banging his gavel. A grave silence filled the room as every person was shocked by the Minister's harsh actions.

"Minister, we cannot send that boy to Azkaban! He's a child for God's sake!" Malfoy exclaimed.

"Perhaps none of you bothered to read his status but as of three days ago, Harry Potter was granted full emancipation. He is, legally and politically speaking, an adult."

Vaunt...

Most wizarding politics tended to try and milk something for all its worth. Such was the case in this trial. They had tried to futilely extinguish all doubt in their client, instead to be trapped by their own plan. If their plan had worked, than the Slivensons would have taken a much deeper fall, proving the stupidity and utter incompetence of their claim. Such greed had led to their downfall. The quote "Innocent until proven guilty" was not widely accepted, even though it was the official policy for judgment. This had led to several men accused of

being death eaters in the past to be sent to Azkaban on mere circumstantial evidence. The habit, since then, had stayed in practice.

As for veritaserum, that option was completely out of the question before. It was against law and procedure to allow an accused veritaserum unless one or both parties requested it. And even then, no minor could be given the serum. If they had tried to do so through the normal way, most children would have died from poisoning. They were not developed enough to take on the strains that the potion would lay upon those who took it. A diluted substance would always be under question and it would bring no end to a trial.

They had rolled the dice and lost.

Game over. The judged has been damned.

Ionos...

It was a sad day for the inhabitants of Montfortal as they heard their supposed future leader thrown into hell on earth. But they knew they could do nothing anymore. Their own men, working inside the Ministry had failed to save the Heir, even with the unknowing assistance of the Malfoys, Longbottoms, Potters, and Dumbledore. They could do nothing now but act.

"Faren, assemble the men. We attack today." Rigan said.

"Sir? I thought you were against such an act-"

"Not anymore. Things change Faren and I know you've been secretly arming the men for this day. You were always too stubborn for your own good. But never too stubborn for the good of the Kingdom. We attack now Faren. While we have a chance. If I die, I want to have the consolation of knowing I tried. I will accompany you to battle." Faren nodded grimly. It was time to take a stand.

AN: My justification for the acceptance of circumstantial evidence is quite simple really. Please remember that the Wizarding world is like some odd fusion of the modern world as we know it and the medieval

ages where they burned people at a whim. For the most part however, the Wizarding World is stuck in the past. And they refuse to advance.

Chapter 38: Failed Strike

Ionos...

Faren stood in front of the Guardians, looking at each one carefully before raising his hands to silence them. "Men, this is it, the day we have trained for. It is time for us to test ourselves in combat against an enemy of worth. Not that rabble we have been forced to hunt down during these past weeks."

Rigan came up from behind Faren. He was dressed in standard battle armor. "Loyal Guardians of the Dragon, today we will be fighting the Aurors of the mainland. Their Ministry has decided to arrest and detain the Heir, our King and Sovereign Lord whom we have sworn to defend at all costs." Mutterings and violent shouts swept through the crowd like wildfire, angering the men and lighting the fire of their passion. "For too long we have tolerated this from the so called Ministry of Magic.

"No longer! Today, we fight to strike back at our oppressors, to stop their abuse and maltreatment of our people. We may be considered as scum and filth, rebels and infidels, citizens of a backwater state. I tell you now, we maybe considered all those things, but we have not forgotten who we are." He took a deep breath. "WE ARE MEN OF IONOS!" A roar of approval greeted his statement as the Guardians began cheering.

Faren stepped forward and raised his fist for effect. "Onwards to victory my brothers, we shall not stay silent today! Ever Burning!" He yelled. The men continued to yell their mantra. The sound of unsheathed swords clanging with shields while the men yelled their battle cries was a sight to both fear and behold.

Faren looked at his men, fired up as they were, nodding in satisfaction. Their morale was at an all time high. "We've done well here." He said, in a low tone.

"Yes, we have indeed. Try to keep their morale this high after the battle. We'll need it for the coming days." Rigan replied.

Faren nodded solemnly. He unsheathed his own blade and raised it high to call the attention of his men. "To your mounts men. Today, we ride!" Still screaming, the Guardians ran hastily to a variety tamed winged beasts. They mounted quickly and took to the skies, a total of forty-eight men on thirty five beasts of the skies.

The torch is lit once more.

This game is not over.

Harry...

A flash of light encompassed the desolate fields and, just as quickly as it came, left. In its place was a party of twenty-one men, Harry in the middle of his escorts. He might have been a convict, but he was still from the Potter Family. That alone made him a security priority even if he was being sent to Azkaban. There would be a nation wide protest if he were to be harmed before reaching the confines of the dreaded prison.

A familiar sound flooded the plains, warming Harry's heart as the party continued. Hedwig, his phoenix, flew overhead; singing her song, the Phoenix Song. Even in his last moments of freedom, he had not been abandoned by his beloved pet. He still clung to on to the hope that was instilled into his heart by the pleasant melody of the fabled bird. His mind was calmed and his determination steeled. Harry was ready for the challenge of surviving in Azkaban. And he wasn't the only one who knew it.

A few miles from the party, Rigan, Faren, and the Guardians had begun setting up their ambush. The song attracted their attention as they saw the phoenix flying over the Aurors, a bird majestic in flight and a sight to marvel at. "The phoenix: a bringer of hope; the one thing that will see us to the end." Rigan whispered to himself, smiling wispily.

"The men are ready sir." Faren stated, moving next to Rigan. "Eight of the men will stay here to guard the mounts. Fifteen guardians will be following you in your blockade against them, while another ten will

flank the Aurors. The rest will be following me into combat and we'll strike from the left flank."

"What about their right flank? That would allow them to escape."

"Yes, but you're forgetting that that area has a river running through it to block off any movement or escape they may plan. If they were stupid enough to put their backs to the river, they would have essentially boxed themselves in." Faren explained.

"I see." Rigan nodded in understanding.

"I would advise you to wait until the men are all in position to signal the beginning the ambush." Faren said. He wasn't in charge of the operation himself; he was merely the tactical advisor and commander. The ultimate choice of actions was in the hands of his superior.

"How long will it take to get the men ready?"

Faren did some quick calculations in his mind. "At least five minutes, maybe ten."

"We don't have that much time. They'll reach the sight of the prison sentries in two minutes. I will lead my men to delay their movement. You work on getting the others ready ASAP." Rigan said, his voice leaving no room for argument.

"Agreed sir." Faren turned towards a group of men near them. "Orthex, you and your men will accompany the Council Lord in a delaying action. Obey him as you would obey me. Am I understood?"

"Sir Yes Sir." Orthex replied instantly, almost instinctively.

Rigan wasted no time in taking command. "Alright men, let's move out by twos." The group of men obeyed instantly, forming into two columns before marching at a fast pace towards their destination. They made sure no one was left behind in their march. Their training and discipline showing clearly in the professional way they held themselves.

In no time at all, they had overtaken the ambling Auror party and stood ready to block their route around a rather tall hill, taking care not to be seen in advance. "Swords and wands at the ready men. The moment they turn around the bend, hit them with everything you've got. I don't to remind all of you to be careful not to hit the heir." Rigan growled, an underlying threat could be made out from his voice. It sounded very much like a "If any of you touch a hair on his head, I'll kill you" threat.

"And remember, we don't want to kill them. Just aim to stun or disable. The most lonos needs is to be branded with harboring a terrorist group of killers. If the Ministry decided to hunt us down for this incident, we are all dead men. So try not to provoke them more than we already are by attacking them." From his tone, it was obvious he was deadly serious. This was no joking matter. This would be life or death; it would be the real deal.

For many of the men, it would be the first time they would experience fighting an experienced foe. Most of their experience had been done against bandits and rogues scouring the countryside of the islands of lonos, not actually trained men such as these Aurors. There was a vast difference between the two groups. The Aurors were war veterans and organized, bound together by trials, ordeals, and battles. The bandits were an unorganized group of men thrown together to loot and plunder, having no sense of loyalty or camaraderie.

Aurors...

The Aurors walked casually through the blackened fields of the island. Not that the grasses had been burned, mere that the chilling presence of the dementors killed much of the vegetation on the island, even though the prison only occupied a fifth of the island's total mass. Most of the surrounding villages were constantly plagued by hunger, severely reducing the civilian populace in the area. The Ministry had turned a blind eye to this fact and refused to restrict the dementors from traveling outside the prison.

Despite popular belief, Azkaban island's terrain was not merely that of desolate plains and dead plants. Hills were quite numerous in the island, taking into account its size. One such hill was currently being

walked around by the Aurors. The group was halfway through the bend when the leading half suddenly froze, bewildering those behind them.

Before they knew what was going on, the eight Aurors who formed the vanguard of the group had gone down, stunned. "We're under attack!" One of the Aurors yelled, brandishing his wand. The others followed suit. "Wilkins, send your Patronus for help, we won't last long without reinforcements." The Patronus Charm was the only known spell that could repel the dementors. In certain cases, they could be used to carry messages as well.

The said person nodded before running up the hill to get a better aim at the direction of Azkaban Prison. The troop of Aurors followed after him, all the while holding off the unknown men attacking them; just barely at that. Harry was dragged along, whether he wanted to or not. It was still within the Auror's duty to ensure his safe arrival at Azkaban.

"Expecto Patronus, Mandatum." Wilkins muttered, making sure not to be heard by the attackers. Chances were, if those men knew of reinforcements, they would fight even harder to overpower them before the reinforcements arrived. A fox made of light appeared before them. "Azkaban prison, requesting immediate back up against unknown number of aggressors, positioned at Central Hill and awaiting help." He sent the Patronus away with a sense of urgency, before turning around to join his comrades in the fray.

The Aurors were now lined up on one side of the hill, fully engaged in the battle with the as of yet unknown, to them, warriors. What they failed to see was the flanking force that was quickly surrounding the hill, so engrossed in the fighting as they were.

Faren directed his men to their positions, positively pleased with how the battle was turning out. Once the men began to charge uphill, they would be sure to secure the Heir. "Men, forward! Victory is almost ours!" Faren said, urging his men to charge at the weakened Auror force who were no desperately trying to hold out, surrounded and outnumbered.

The Aurors, panicking at the face of the new force joining the fight, started firing off as many spells as they could with no apparent sense of direction as to where they were aiming. A few of his men were knocked out by the wild spells, but most never made contact, flying over their heads instead.

Suddenly, someone cried out from the Aurors. "Men, shield wall!" Faren frowned. He had never heard of this tactic before. He looked around and saw his men hesitate. That brief pause proved to be costly as a magical barrier appeared around the Aurors' position. By now, the Aurors had formed into a circle, back-to-back.

"Break it down." Faren commanded, projecting his voice so it would be heard by everyone without him having to shout. Dozens of exploding hexes slammed into the shield. It faltered for a moment, buckling under the force of the spells, but still, it held. Another volley slammed into the protective wall almost instantly after the first wave hit, cracks on the shield appeared.

Faren narrowed his eyes dangerously, eyeing the wall which refused to crumble beneath the onslaught of spells they had thrown at it so far. "Hit it harder!" He growled. The men obeyed instantly, sending three volleys in quick succession towards the wall. Dust from the force of the impact filled their vision. When the dust cleared, the shield had cracks in every which way. It was becoming painfully clear to the Aurors that the shield wouldn't hold much longer. The fear was evident in the Aurors' eyes.

"Fire!" The shield, as expected, shattered, unable to withstand the sheer amount of spells thrown at it. Most of the Aurors were unconscious, instantly hit by stunners as the shield crumbled around them. The few who were still awake were nervously eyeing those who had surrounded them.

Faren was about to give the order to finish them off, when he suddenly felt a sharp drop in temperature. He knew only of one creature which could cause this, a creature so widely feared that even the most battle hardened warriors would run away at its sight, the dementors. He turned quickly to see how far the hellish creatures were. They were not far, perhaps less than twenty meters away.

Faren was faced with a split second decision. Either he called a retreat and abandoned quite probably the one chance they had to rescue the Heir, or to continue to fight a now seemingly lost battle while losing most of his men in the process.

They say leaders are people who had to make the hardest choices in life. It seemed increasingly true with the rapid change of events currently ongoing. He called out to his men with regret evident in his voice. "Retreat! Fall back to the mounts!" The men stood shocked at the new order. They knew their leader to be one of the most fanatical followers of freeing the heir. They would never have thought him to call out a retreat. "Move! The dementors will be upon us any moment!" He yelled, stirring the men from their stupor. They hastily levitated those among them that were knocked out during the fight and ran for their lives.

The dementors glided forward in apparent glee, hoping to feast on some of the slower runners. The Aurors let out a cheer as they watched the dreaded beasts chase down their attackers. It was unclear if they were cheering because their ambushers had been driven off, or because they were glad to see the soul thieves go. Either way, they seemed rather high in spirits.

Within minutes, the fleeing force had reached the rendezvous point, meeting up with the guards of the mounts. Faren looked at the distance between his men and the dementors, calculating how quickly all his men could fly away versus how long it would take for the dementors to get to them. Their chances to depart from the forsaken island before the dreary dementors reached them was not looking good.

"Elites, form up and delay those things!" Faren yelled. The former Dragon Elites who had joined his group would surely now how to cast the Patronus Charm. It had been covered during their training. Barely any time had passed when a variety of animals made form light stood between the retreating men and the keepers of Azkaban. The animals charged at the dementors, trying to keep the dark cloaked figures from reaching the men.

The momentary delay was all the Guardians needed to fly away, leaving the dementors circling below them, hopelessly beyond pursuit. Faren glanced back at the island sadly. There was nothing more he could have done for the Heir, despite what he might have wished. But Faren was a rational man, and he knew the limitations of his men. Forgive me, my lord. I have failed you.

Rigan...

Throughout the battle, he had refused to take command once Faren arrived. He might have been the one in charge, but he knew, realistically speaking, that Faren was a better tactical commander on the field. Besides, he was getting too old for this sort of work.

He sighed heavily, risking a peek at Faren, a sorry look on his face. He had, in his heart of hearts, always known Faren would fail here. The men were simply not yet ready. They had barely finished their training and, despite their loyalty and determination, were hopelessly outmatched. He had permitted this attack to teach Faren some patience and humility, both of which the young man lacked. He had done this in the hopes that Faren would become a better strategist, and in the long run, have more foresight.

Faren was a superb tactician, a rational thinker, and a skilled warrior, but he simply took no heed of the political situation and consequences which would accompany the ambush. Had they succeeded, the Heir would be dead by now.

Hyde would never have allowed the heir to rule. The man loved his independence too much. The heir would have been assassinated or usurped. If they wanted the heir to survive, he would have to be crowned immediately. And for that too occur, the Ministry of Magic would have to recognize his crowning in the stead of the late lord of Ionos. The Ministry would never accept an alleged criminal as a ruler of Ionos. No, the heir would have to be cleared first. Then, he would ascend to the throne.

They would prevail in the end. The heir would be crowned eventually. It was merely a matter of time. After all, patience is a virtue.

“...The failed ambush of the Guardians at Azkaban marked the first major engagement the Guardians were involved in. Due to both sides refusal to use potentially lethal spells, there was a 0% casualty rate. The battle and subsequent retreat of the Guardians had shown clearly that the group was not yet prepared to fight a group as trained as the Aurors.

“It is now seen as an important stepping stone to the Guardians eventual success as a group. It proved to be a realistic evaluation of the Guardians during that time. It was also an example of the quick thinking and rationality of General Faren Serathi that would later on cement his position within the Inner Circle of Lord Ionos. Despite heavy criticism that had befallen upon him, Lord Ionos valued his logic and decisions during the situation...”

-excerpt from How it all began: The Rise of Ionos, Chapter VII: Faren Serathi, by Theodore Geoffrey Krasper, 1st edition

CHP40